

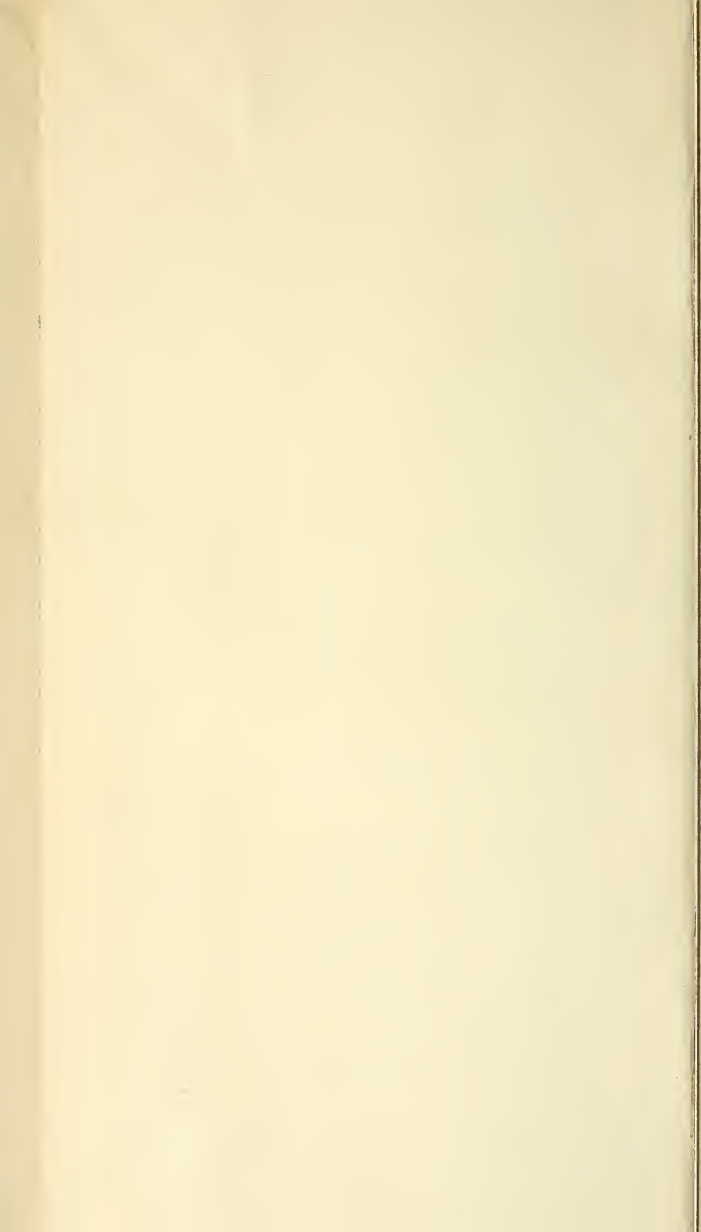


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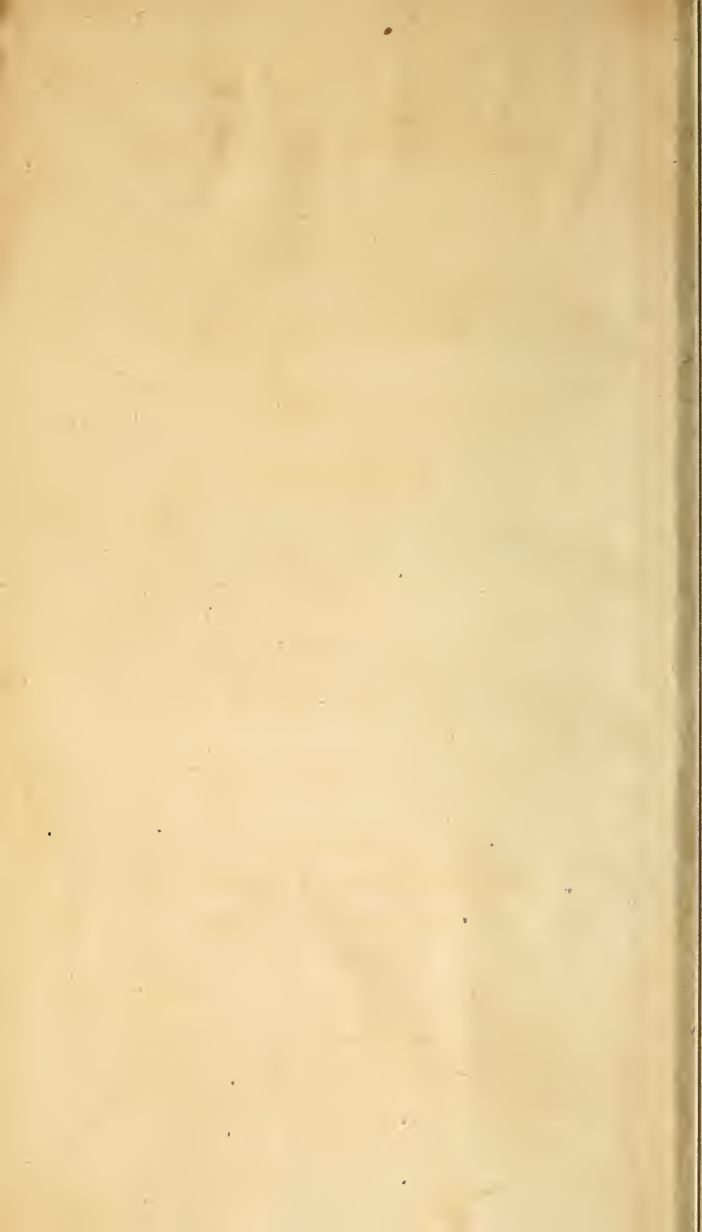








SPLendid MISERY.



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SPLENDID MISERY.

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

By T. S. SURR.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

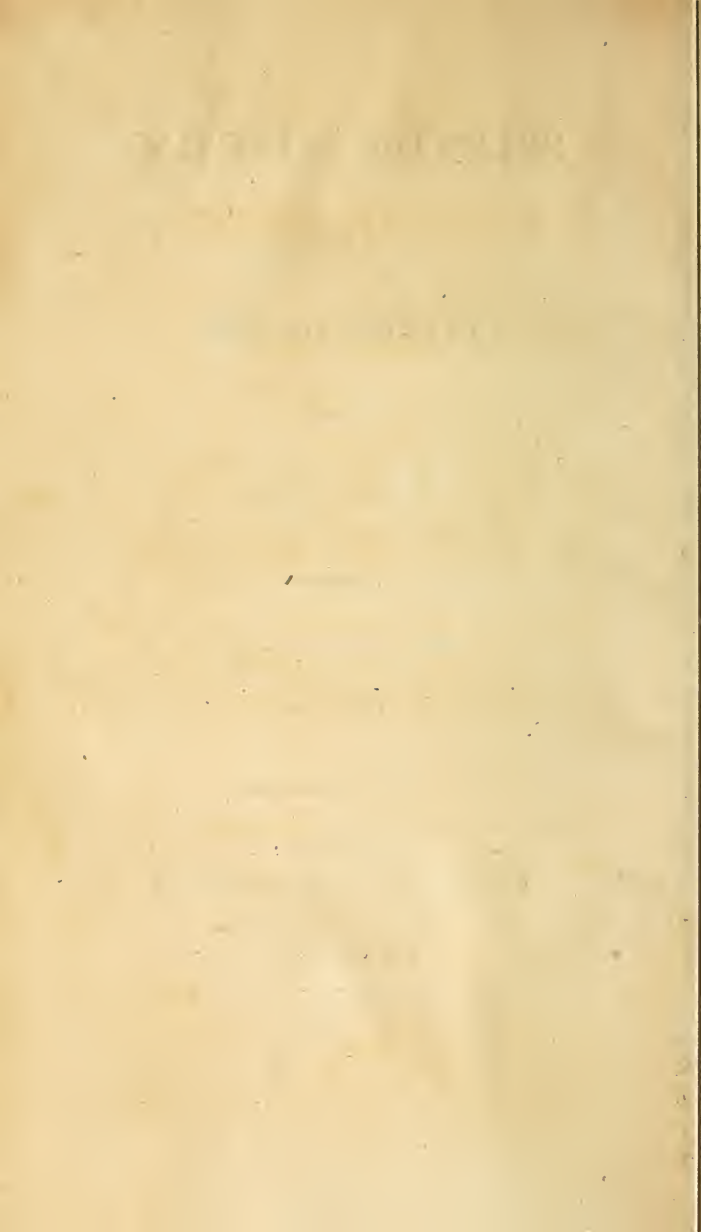
VOL. II.

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1807.



SPLENDID MISERY.

CHAP. I.

The House in the Wood.

ELMER had scarcely reached his own apartment, when he received a summons to attend the Earl.

“Is the outer door fastened?” enquired the unhappy nobleman as he entered.

“It is, my Lord.”

“And is Durand in waiting—and alone?”

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A

“He

“ He is.”

“ Are you quite sure no one is in the lobby?”

“ Not a soul is there, except Durand, my Lord.”

“ Well, then, my friend, ere we again separate, more than the life of Latimore,—his fame, will be in your custody.”

“ My dearest Lord—”

“ Nay, nay, no words, no words, I pray, my friend. Mine is not a wound that can be salved. I ask not sympathy or pity, but aid—active and important service. Let me recollect—I think I mentioned that accident led me to the discovery of the retreat of that most infamous trio, who, under masks of more than common virtue, practised

practised the worst of vices. Could it have been thought, that a mind like Olivia's would become the prey of low desires, or that a man, preaching morality, and carrying sanctity in his very looks, that old Julian would be the pander of such infamous intrigue? As for that arch hypocrite, her paramour—her Mortimer—him I knew to be such.

“He it was who came to the cottage-gate, and with matchless impudence accosted me, exclaiming in a haughty tone—

“Your business here, friend.”

“Do you know me, scoundrel,” said I?

“I know you well,” replied he;
“you are the destroyer of the peace of
A 2 families

families—the murderer of the Marchioness della Zoretta, whose grave you dug when you enclosed her lovely daughter in a living cloistered tomb!—Know you! you are the mighty favourite of the Fates—a *living Monument of Splendid Misery*. Away, away, man, leave this peaceful cot, where love and innocence, sheltered from the shafts of malice and revenge, repose on peaceful pillows, and wake to mornings gilded by the rays of hope. *You can have no business here.*”

“As he spoke he opened the gate, came out upon the lawn, and shutting the gate again, placed his back against it, in an attitude, that seemed to say, “You shall not enter here.”—“I demand to see the daughter of the Marquis della Zoretta,” said I.

“The Marquis della Zoretta has no
daugh-

daughter: his cruelty dissolved the bonds of duty and the ties of nature. She, who was his daughter, is now the wife of one who will not yield her to any authority on earth."

"Unparalleled impudence!" exclaimed I. "Unblushingly you own then, that you have dared to violate the holy cloisters, and sacrilegiously ravish from the altar of her God"—

"Hold, Sir, if you please," cried he; "I have not thus said, nor shall you insinuate as much with impunity. The victim of power, which she could not resist, Olivia della Zoretta was compelled awhile to submit to superstitious horrors, at which the enlightened mind revolts; her release from such base thralldom was a work in which I glory. The protestant faith, which, from deep conviction, she

she has embraced, admits not of such horrid immolations."

"Poor fallen Olivia!" exclaimed I. "So not content with despoiling her of the honours of her birth, and of her fortune, you confess"—the very prostitution of her mind I would have added—but, like a fury, the villain seized me by the collar, exclaiming—"Retract that word this moment; instantly recal it, or by the sacred trust to which I am consecrated, I will not loose this hold till—" "I know not how he would have finished his threat, for indignation had taken such complete possession of my soul, that in a frenzy I drew my sword, and aimed a blow at the villain's heart. That time it failed. We wrestled for some minutes, during which he strove repeatedly to disarm me, and at length, accursed be the moment, he succeeded.

ceeded. Yes, Elmer, again was I conquered, and by Mortimer. He threw me—knelt upon my breast—forced from me my weapon, and pointed it at my bosom. “Your life is in my power,” said he, “I spare it. By the laws of honour and of justice you have forfeited it, for you have attempted the life of an unarmed man.” He then rose, and walked some paces towards the cottage. Oh memory, memory, why do I bear thy torments? The agonies of that moment are still fresh bleeding wounds. I bit the dust in madness—I raved—I swore aloud that I would have vengeance on the instrument of my disgrace, and vowed never to relinquish the pursuit of my revenge, till every punishment, which civil or ecclesiastical power could inflict, had overtaken all of them.

“Rail on, rail on,” said he. “We never

never flattered ourselves with hopes of your contrition, barbarous man. But recollect, thou arrogant one, that there is a power superior even to Latimore's—and under the shield of Him, omnipotent, Virtue may ever calmly rest, safe from the malice of its foes."

"He then retired towards the cottage, bearing in his conquering hand, the sword of Latimore. I think I see him, at this present moment, triumphantly exhibiting his prize, at the feet of Olivia. The image still fires my soul—my brain now burns—my heart now throbs—as when my eyes, glaring with revenge, followed his footsteps till he had gained the cottage gate—I then sprang from the ground, and hurried to the inn.

"Persuaded that they would lose

no

no time in changing the place of their retreat, I instantly dispatched Benson, my valet, to watch the cottage, and ordered him, if they quitted it, to make himself acquainted with their route. At the same time I sent a courier to Bologna, to the Marquis della Zoretta, with intelligence of my discovery.

“I then quitted the village with my retinue, and took the road to Toulouse, intending to pay a visit, I had long promised, to the President, but took especial care that it should be reported, I had proceeded towards Bologna.

“Fate so ordained it, that on the same day that I arrived at Toulouse, arrived there also the late Duke of Derrington and his two sons, the then Marquis of Leverton, the present Duke, and Lord William Derrington.

The outward courtesy with which I was compelled to meet Lord William but ill concealed the rooted hatred I had imbibed for him. A period of three years had elapsed since we had met ; I had heard much of his improvement, and report had merely done him justice.—he had perfected himself in every qualification necessary to his favourite object, namely, that of becoming a great statesman. His elder brother, the present Duke, served as a foil to him. The stupid dullness—the apathetic indifference of the one, rendered the shining talents, and quick penetration of the other, so much the more brilliant, and I was repeatedly compelled to the mortification of hearing the most fulsome praises lavished upon my rival, at the expence of his brother. The influence of my father had hitherto defeated several plans for the advancement of the young gentleman, but he
had,

had, in spite of it, lately been employed as Secretary to Sir William, then resident at Naples. By the favourable issue of a project, which had originated with him, the people at home were led to idolize him—lauded him to the skies, and hailed him as a prodigy of youthful wisdom. Nothing was then talked of but the wisdom and eloquence of Lord Derrington, and he was already in prospect the leader of the British House of Commons. I knew well to whose tuition all these rare qualities were attributable ; I hated them both more and more.

“ In a few days Benson arrived at Toulouse. He brought me intelligence, that Julian and Olivia left the cottage on the very day on which I had discovered it, attended by only one female servant. Benson remained at the village, to watch the motions

tions of Mortimer, not doubting but that, by following the latter, he should be conducted to the retreat of the former. He was perfectly right in his conjecture. The next day but one, Mortimer having arranged all concerns relative to the cottage, unattended, and very much disguised, took the road to Toulouse. To Toulouse Benson followed him, and actually traced him to the house of a Jeweller, at the corner of the very square, in which was situated the palace of the President of Toulouse, where I resided. "And in lodgings at that Jeweller's," concluded Benson, "the old Conjuror, the Lady, and Mr. Sydney, are at this moment."

"Enough, enough, exclaimed I, they are now in my power. I enjoined the strictest secrecy upon Benson, and ordered him to keep a watchful

watchful eye upon their proceedings.

“ The first fruit of his vigilance was the discovery of a most important secret—nothing less than that Olivia was married—not to Mortimer, as I had always imagined, but to Lord William Derrington. Their marriage, indeed, was illegal, as it had taken place before he was of age, and without the consent or even knowledge of the Duke, his father. A correspondence which Benson ingeniously intercepted, proved this beyond a doubt. Mortimer, it clearly appeared, was really nothing more than the humble dependent of Lord William, at the same time that he continued his monitor and instructor. He and Julian had effected Olivia’s elopement from the convent, had accompanied her to England, where
she

she was privately married to Lord William, and remained there till her husband went to Naples, since which period she had remained under the protection of Mortimer. The packet disclosed, also, the ambitious views of Lord William and his mentor, which rendered it necessary that his marriage should be kept a secret till the death of the Duke should place him in a state of independence. Of me, too, frequent mention was made in these epistles, and every epithet exhausted to describe their dread and their abhorrence. I was their evil genius—the dæmon—the fiend, who hovered o'er them, and darkened the prospect of their happiness. Other letters would be written in triumphant strains. The tottering of my father's influence at Court was hailed with rapture. The seals of Secretary of State were almost tangible in the visions of Lord William ;

liam; and the fellow, Mortimer, in his dreams, was already a Lord Chancellor; while the disappointed Latimore was beheld, through the same delusive optics, as scowling in opposition minorities, that impotently railed at the power of Lord Derrington. Judge of my sensations as I read this effusion of folly. Much as I despised the pigmy champions in the puny conspiracy thus brought to light, I hated them not the less because I feared them not, and therefore resolved to crush them.

“ You are to understand, sir, that this correspondence was not intercepted all at once. It was a regular series of letters, written at intervals, during a period of some weeks, which the ingenuity of Benson contrived to make pass through my hands in its way to Olivia. Soon after their arrival at
Toulouse,

Toulouse, apprised of my residence there, the fugitives again took flight, and retired to a small isolated dwelling, near a village, about ten miles distant, where they hoped to remain concealed. Lord William being obliged to be with his father, whose health was daily declining, saw them but seldom, and the letters which passed at this period, are those to which I have alluded. In the mean time the Marquis della Zoretta wrote to me, in answer to my account of the discovery of his daughter—"that he had abandoned her as a disgrace to his name; that he had settled his estates upon a cousin of the Prince of Beaumont; that he looked hourly for his dissolution, and begged never more to be reminded of his calamity by the mention of Olivia."

"This

“ This resolve of the Marquis left me at perfect liberty to pursue my own plans of vengeance, and the declining state of the Duke of Derrington’s health, was a stimulus to put them in execution. Revenge I had resolved upon; the method only was undecided. Accident determined for me. There were at that time a considerable number of English nobility and gentry at Toulouse, and they were notorious for their gallantries. Among them all, however, the eldest son of Sir George Collyer was celebrated as the Prince of Libertines. With a spirit uncommonly daring he combined a head so intriguing that there was no post in the wars of gallantry too hazardous or too arduous for the enterprise and cunning of young Collyer. Though I by no means entered into all the frivolities of this circle of choice spirits, yet it was impossible

possible to avoid occasionally mixing with them. One day, at the house of the President, among many others of the stamp, dined young Collyer. The Duke of Derrington was to have been of the party, but was prevented by indisposition. His sons, however, were present. After the bottle had circulated pretty freely, Collyer, as was his custom, began to boast of new conquests, or to anticipate new victims among the fair. That day he entertained the company by a discovery he had lately made of the most beautiful woman, to whom Italy had ever given birth. He then gave so accurate a description of Olivia, and the place of her retreat, that no doubt remained in my mind as to the object of his new pursuit, for he swore she should be his, in spite of all the reserve and mystery that enveloped her charms and her story. Lord
William

William left the room almost immediately : I well knew the cause. I also retired to arrange the thousand thoughts which this mere insinuation of young Collyer had created. I will not now go over all the contentions of mind which took place that night in this troubled bosom. I thought on all the splendid destiny my father had first painted to my fancy. I thought on the most singular confirmation which old Julian had added. Again I saw in the persons of Lord William and his monitor, obstacles to the realization of this splendid dream. I recollected all that Julian had said of evil arising to me from Olivia, and I persuaded myself that Lord William, Mortimer, Julian, and Olivia, were to be all trampled under foot, ere I could arrive at the possession of that glory to which my soul aspired. Then, again, memory painted in broad
light

light and shades, the infamy I had endured from Mortimer. I saw myself prostrate at his feet, and felt the conqueror's knee upon my breast; I saw his triumphant march, bearing my sword away. I remembered too the victory of Derrington, in the duel, at Bologna, and hate, ambition, and revenge strove for the mastery of my stormy soul. Just then entered Benson with the letter which Lord William had retired from the President's to write. 'Twas full of love and confidence, but pathetically described his anxiety arising from the anecdote of Collyer. When I had read this letter, I exclaimed—"Fate, then, has furnished me with weapons for the destruction of my foes, and if I do not now receive and use them, I may hereafter sigh in vain for opportunities that never will return. If the old Duke should die, Olivia is.

is proclaimed the wife of this Lord William. They and their Mortimer embark for England, and the triple alliance against my fame and fortunes may become invincible—It shall not be—I will destroy them. Yes, Fate, I take at thy hands this sword, and take thou back the scabbard; never shall it be sheathed till Mortimer or Latimore expire.”

“That moment I resolved upon my plan. The letter I have mentioned I forwarded, but Olivia’s answer, full of fond reproof and angry love, I kept back. No answer reached Lord William. In the interim I sought out Collyer; represented Olivia as a wanton beauty, eloped from a convent, who was then in the keeping of Lord William, under the custody of his *prime pimp*, Mortimer. I assured him that nothing but courage

was

was necessary to carry off the prize, and, upon his oath of secrecy, promised him my aid. I inflamed his love, by exaggerating her charms; I inflated his vanity, by swelling the glory and the triumph of success; and, in short, roused him to instant action. Ruffians were hired—carriages prepared; at the dead of night the retired dwelling of Olivia was stormed, and she herself forced into a carriage, and conveyed, almost senseless, to a house, engaged for the purpose, at a great distance, in the center of a wood. Mortimer, at the same moment, was thrust into another carriage, and old Julian into a third. It was a part of my plan, that their cloaths, and other moveables, should be conveyed with them, to induce the belief that their departure was premeditated. All this was performed with so much silence, that the old woman, their
only

only domestic, who slept in the house, remained undisturbed.

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 " In the morning a servant of Lord William's, found this old dame half dead with terror and astonishment. She could give him no account whatever of the fugitives, but, as was the fact, declared herself alike ignorant of the nature of their departure, or the place of their destination. With this thunderbolt of surprise and horror, the fellow returned to his master. His state of mind may be imagined, if you will recollect his situation. Confined to the sick room of his father, to whom he dared not, as he valued his future subsistence, even as a private gentleman, divulge his grief. The only friend near him was a brother, with too much apathy to feel for his situation, and too little sense to assist him, even if his fidelity could be relied on. His bosom-confidant, his Mortimer: his tried and faithful

faithful Julian, and the idol of his soul, Olivia, fled, without one line in answer to his letter relative to Collyer: all these reflections must have poured their torrents of horror upon his mind, and overwhelmed him with despair. As if fate itself had frowned upon him, at that very moment the symptoms of the Duke's disease altered materially for the worse, and his physicians warned his sons that he was in the most imminent danger; that they could not even answer for his life one day. Towards evening, as if by accident, I called to enquire after the Duke's health. I saw Lord William—saw his anguish, and found it necessary to summon all the powers of recollection and of foresight, that fed the united spirits of my ambition and revenge. Thus fortified against compunction I proceeded with my design. Hitherto we had forborne to mention in our interviews,

views, the names of Mortimer or of Olivia. I now addressed him with apparent concern, and requested a private audience.

“ Pray, my Lord,” said I, “ indulge me with a candid answer to a question which materially concerns your happiness. Are you married ?”

“ He started, and seemed hesitating whether to receive the question in a friendly way or otherwise. I continued—“ Pardon me, my Lord, but the time is now gone by, when the worth of Olivia della Zoretta rendered her an object that reflected honour upon the rivals who contended for her favour.—I see the state of your mind, my Lord, and to spare your feelings, I will be brief. It has happened to me to have detected a most infamous conspiracy. You have been too long the dupe

of artful beauty and selfish villainy.

“If, Sir,” stammered he, “you can produce me proof of this—but it is impossible—It is a design—I see it clearly—I know you discovered the peaceful retreat of my wife, for such I scruple not to own her—You attempted the life of my friend—drove them from their home by your persecution---again you have discovered their place of concealment, and to your machinations I attribute their second flight.”

“Their second flight!” exclaimed I with apparent astonishment. “Then Collyer has succeeded.”

“Collyer!” ejaculated he with anguish, and raising his hand to his head.

“I seized the moment. “Lord William Derrington,” said I solemnly, “hear me: then give just what degree of credit

credit you please to my information. I certainly once loved Olivia. I saw, however, with anguish, that her affections had been seduced by the fellow Mortimer. The simple circumstance of her rapture at the discovery of the Milton—”

“If that be your only positive evidence,” interrupted he, “suffer me at once to undeceive you. The book was a gift from me—the name on the title page was written by me—Mortimer was the name I assumed in all my letters to Olivia, to guard against a discovery of my attachment should they be ever intercepted by her parents.”

“Oh, no, my Lord ; I have ten-fold stronger evidence than this ; the evidence of my eyes, my ears. I am as sure Olivia loved Mortimer Sydney as I am of my existence. Your

wealth and countenance was necessary to the success of her intrigue with him, and they have conjointly played upon the unsuspecting generosity of your heart.—Julian, of Rosenbergh, the old hypocrite, in a fit of deep remorse, occasioned by a presentiment of his speedy death, has turned penitent. He has confessed to me but yesterday such an infamous course of crimes from the period of Olivia's release from the convent to the present hour, that human nature itself has sunk in my estimation, lower than ever. In vain I urged him, as the only retribution in his power, to see you, and convince you of the injuries imposed upon your unsuspecting nature. This he positively refused, as a task that would annihilate him. He entreated me, however, to assure you from himself that Mortimer was the most artful and accomplished of villains, and that Olivia would soon produce
a living

a living proof of her matchless infidelity, and his unexampled ingratitude, which it was intended the world should one day receive as the offspring of Lord William Derrington; unless the overtures, which the son of Sir George Collyer had made to Olivia, should defeat the ambitious views of Mortimer, who has hitherto in vain strove to counteract the impression which the wealth and person of this professed libertine have made upon Olivia's vanity. "But it is my firm belief," concluded old Julian, "that some plan has already been arranged between Olivia and her new admirer, Collyer, for an elopement."

"Good God!" exclaimed Lord William, "Are you in earnest? But you must be serious. What you have told me must be truth. No dæmon from the regions of the lowest hell could

could be so artfully malignant as to invent—Besides, they really are gone. Oh! my soul sickens—my brain burns. Sir, if you are deceiving me, there is not a torture that the tormentors of infernals can inflict, but would be mercy to what you will merit—to what you will feel—but no, the form of man cannot harbour a spirit so dæmoniac. Sir, I believe you—but where is Julian?”

“I had taken care, through the influence of the French Ambassador, to have Julian inclosed for ever within the impenetrable walls of the Bastile, at Paris.

“To Loyd William I replied—“Old Julian left me with an assurance that he would retire to a monastery: that he would never more be seen; and that all search for him would be in vain.”

“With

“With the impressions, which my well-told story may be supposed to have wrought upon Lord William, I left him to combat, and took my leave.—Hope would not easily quit his breast, and he stole from the hotel, where the Duke his father resided, to make further inquiries. This circumstance I had expected, and provided for in such a way, as that the further he inquired the more credit my information gained.—At the cottage, the furniture and moveables remained, only such articles were taken as were necessary on a journey, excepting a curiously wrought box containing, as Lord William said, some letters, and money to a large amount. This box, I remembered, Benson told me he put into the chaise with Olivia. Thus appearances confirmed my story, and it was the common talk of the place that young Collyer had gone upon a new adventure.

“Lord

“ Lord William gave himself up to despair; a fever ensued, and he remained several weeks in danger.

“ In the mean time important events took place at the House in the Wood. Benson, my valet, in whom I placed unbounded confidence, was the chief agent there. Olivia was confined in a room at one extremity of the house, and Mortimer at the other. Collyer, to whom affairs of this sort were mere matters of business, assailed the virtue of Olivia by every method he well knew how to practise, but constantly in vain.

“ I myself determined upon an interview with Mortimer, and in that interview took place the long foretold catastrophe, which has destroyed my peace beyond redemption. The spirit of Mortimer, unyielding to his situation,

situation, indignant and impassioned, uttered such taunting defiances, and imprecated such curses on my head, that, fired once more to madness, again I drew my sword, and again aimed a stroke which found a fatal passage to the viper's heart. He died, Elmer—yes, this arm inflicted the punishment of his temerity, but that punishment was Murder. He was defenceless—my prisoner, and I slew him. Oh, to what acts of horror has my ambitious spirit led me !”

Here the Earl paused. He struck his forehead with both his hands, and evinced the anguish of his heart by soul-piercing groans. After a time—“ Elmer,” said he, “ you still gaze upon me without horror. Are not the features of my face expressive of my crime? Am I not like the first murderer—marked—branded? Do you not

read misery and guilt in my phrenzied eyes? And yet, even yet, you know not all my murders. She, she, whom every virtue dignified, whom every grace adorned, she, too, Olivia herself, I slew."

Elmer started.

"Not by the sword," cried the Earl quickly. "No, no. The blood of one fellow creature has left spots enough upon these hands; I did not imbrue them in Olivia's. No. And yet I caused her death; I drove her to despair, and her despair hurried the wretched one to suicide. 'Twas thus, Elmer:

"After the murder—that is, the death-blow at least, which I inflicted on Mortimer, I flew to Benson, who was in another part of the house, and assuring him,

him, that Mortimer had first attempted my life I acquainted him with the catastrophe as an act of self-defence, but added, that as the affair could not be investigated by justice without exposing the whole adventure, I wished that the body should be buried in the wood, and swore him to eternally secrecy.

“To Collyer I related that in consequence of an annuity, ‘promised him by me Mortimer, had abandoned all further hopes of Lord William’s patronage, and had set off for England, leaving Olivia wholly in our power.”

“By G—,” exclaimed Collyer, “I don’t half like the business. The girl most solemnly asserts that she is Lord William’s wife; besides, she is pregnant. I am actually inclined to give up the pursuit, and return to——”

“What,”

“What, after all your boasted victories—after all your triumphs, to be laughed at, at last,” said I. “Give up the pursuit—what—and suffer Olivia to follow you, and proclaim the whole adventure? A pretty figure you would cut.”

“No, no, that won’t do neither,” replied he. “We are in for it, Lattimore, and must conquer or die. I will give her till to-morrow to reflect, and then if she yields not, I must resort to violence. After that, you know, the terms will be at our option. I am resolved it shall be so, for I am heartily tired of living in this dreary old house in the middle of a wood. So send Benson to me, and I will send her my ultimatum.”

“Benson was the only servant that remained in the house belonging to

to us. The proprietor of the place was an out-law of most abandoned principles, and of most daring enterprise, and for a valuable consideration to him his house was notoriously hired for the worst and most horrible purposes.

“Benson accordingly attended upon Olivia, and, after his interview, I met the fellow coming from the room in which she was confined. He was in tears. The sight petrified my blood. There is nothing so pungent to a guilty soul as the contrition of a companion in guilt. “ Upon my soul, I can’t help it—I can’t indeed, your honour,” cried the fellow. “ She is quite *delirious*, and, I am sure, she’ll die.” “Is she not sensible?” “Oh, no, indeed,” replied the fellow. —I entered the room, and found her
in

in a high state of delirium. I hurried from the scene.—My reflections grew torturing, and I proposed to Collyer, that we should leave the place for a day or two, and await the effects of repose upon Olivia, before we took any further steps.

“After an interview with Benson, relative to the disposal of Mortimer’s remains, we set off for the town of —— about eight miles from the wood, where *incog.* we endeavoured to evaporate the powers of reflection by amusing occupations.

“We were, however, alarmed the following morning by the unexpected appearance of Benson, with terror in his looks. Fearful of what he might divulge, I seized him and dragged him to a private room.

“Your

“Your errand, sirrah,” said I, “but tell me not that he lives.”

“Oh, no, your honour. I dug his grave, with the assistance of Salano, the out-law, deep enough to prevent his ever troubling your honour; but the lady—the lady, your honour, has escaped.”

“Dam——n,” exclaimed I. “My fame—my honour is blasted.”

“No, no, indeed—she does not even suspect your honour. How should she?”

“Fool,” cried I, “will she not instantly fly to Lord William?”

“No, surely; did not your honour order me to make her believe that it was the Duke that had employed the
ruffians

ruffians to get her into our power, having heard that she was likely to have a child by his son? Did not I make her believe that it was a friend of the Duke's, who was now trying to get possession of her, to wean her away from Lord William? And doesn't she believe as how I am a servant of the Duke?"

"I suffered the fellow to proceed, for the recollection of what he said was so far consolatory, as it rendered her immediate return to Toulouse, or even her application to Lord William, unlikely. Still I could not endure the tortures of uncertainty, and after a consultation with Collyer, we determined to pursue her, and leave no means untried till we discovered her; as we both dreaded the consequences of her reaching Toulouse, and obtaining the ear of Lord William. There
were

were but two roads of which she had the choice. Collyer took one of them, and Benson and myself the other. We were to meet at a place agreed upon in three days' time. A month, however, elapsed, and no intelligence was obtained. Another had nearly passed, when the activity of Collyer, aided by some spies he had employed, discovered that she had been at Paris. We hastened thither, and from a widow, with whom she had lodged in an obscure street there, we learned that she had quitted Paris for Leghorn. "The poor lady was pregnant," added the widow, "and she was desirous of going there to lie in, at the house of a relation of mine who is an excellent surgeon."

"We proceeded instantly towards Leghorn, but met with so many delays for want of horses, that I grew impatient.

impatient. At one stage I accidentally overheard a conversation between Benson and the landlord of the inn, that opened my eyes to the treachery of the scoundrel. He was offering a bribe to the man to say, that we could not be furnished with horses to proceed that night. I seized the villain by the collar unexpectedly. He knew me resolute, and trembled for his life. He fell upon his knees, and imploring my mercy swore solemnly he would discover the cause of such a proceeding. It then appeared, Elmer, that this fellow, who had lived with me from the time I was twelve or thirteen years old, and who, I believe, would himself have committed murder to serve me, this fellow had been seduced from my purpose by the pathetic pleadings of Olivia, at the House in the Wood. He had not merely connived at her escape, but had
assisted

assisted her in it, and actually apprised her, by letter, of our journey to Leghorn. "Villain, said I—scoundrel, to betray your master!"

"No, upon my soul, your Honour, I have not betrayed you. No, as I hope for mercy for all my sins, the lady does not know but what I belong to the Duke. I only saved her from that brutal man; I beg your Honour's pardon—that Mr. Collyer. She did so dread his attempts, and in her state, your Honour. I could not bear that such a beauteous good creature should fall a prey; besides, she did so pray and cry, and call on heaven, that a heart of stone, your Honour, would have melted. She said she only wished to live and die in peace, unknown to all the world, that she had got money enough in a little box she had with her, to keep her from wanting, and that if I
would.

would only save her from the cruel treatment she was threatened with, she never would be seen by any soul who knew her. So that the Duke, nor any of the family should ever know it. I consented at last, my Lord, and you know the rest. I own I have wrote to let her know she was pursued, but even to this moment she, poor soul, thinks it is the Duke pursues her still."

"On the truth of this statement you pledge your life, remember," said I.

"I will my soul," replied he.

"We proceeded, and arrived at Leghorn. Poor persecuted Olivia! Two days before our arrival, Benson's dispatch had reached her. Her anguish at the intelligence, as described by a woman, who lived with her as a servant,

vant, was beyond her power to bear. She looked wild; the woman, terrified at her appearance, and apprehensive, from her expressions, that she would destroy herself, had spoken to the people of the house to watch her. In spite of their vigilance, she had escaped them, and was seen running precipitately towards the sea. She had left a note on her table, discharging her servant, and another, directed in Italian, for Mr. Hy. Benson, to be delivered to any inquirer. I opened it with trembling. It contained these few words : —“ Humane man, accept the last thanks of a persecuted creature, who, ere you receive this, will be no more. Tell the Duke your master, that without the open and avowed love of my husband, I could not live. I despaired of that blessing, since I have been so long abandoned, and therefore I die. I have taken care, that
what

what remains of the gold I received from my husband, shall be usefully disposed of. I mention it, that no suspicion may fall on the kind people, who live in the house.

“Eternally adieu!”

“My first impressions were, that I was still imposed upon. I severely and scrupulously examined Benson, and the people of the house; but every thing I learned strengthened the apprehension that she had drowned herself, and in the course of that day it was confirmed beyond all doubt, by the discovery of her hat and veil, which were cast upon the beach.

“Here, then, Elmer, ended our pursuit Collyer and I mutually swore, by our honour, and the point of our swords, never to divulge the adventure, and agreed upon a story to be put in
circulation

circulation, which was this—"that Mortimer and Olivia had eluded the pursuit of Collyer, and, as it was supposed, were settled, somewhere or other under assumed names."

"Meanwhile the Duke of Derrington died at Toulouse, and his sons were compelled to accompany his remains to England, as he had desired to be interred in the family vault. Immediately after the will of the Duke was opened, which gave Lord William a noble independence, the following advertisement, in Italian, appeared in every paper published in Europe :

"TO OLIVIA.

"Should thine eyes, Olivia, fall on this address, learn, that the event, which was fixed upon as the signal
for

for the avowal of OUR UNION to the world, has taken place. Art thou innocent, fly to him, whose arms are ever vacant, if Olivia be false. Art thou the guilty creature that report pronounces thee, still come to him, whose pity never can desert her, who once for him deserted Parents—Friends—Fortune—Fame.—Still, if nor want, nor love, should prompt thee to obey this call, at least let pity and humanity procure for me a revelation of the mysteries that torture me with agonizing struggles of despair and hope.

MORTIMER.”

“ Aware that this address, though perfectly enigmatical to all the rest of the world, would be understood by me, Lord William wrote to me at Vienna, where I then resided, and in the most pathetic manner entreated my

my opinion and advice. I answered him as it suited my purpose ;—that I verily believed Mortimer and Olivia lived together, in some part of the world or other, as husband and wife. This letter closed the correspondence of Lord William and me ; since which time twenty years have elapsed, during which the grave has sealed, in everlasting silence, the lips of all those, whose babbling tongues might else have troubled me. Collyer, by a continued, course of dissipation, soon finished the destruction of his constitution, and died, at Lisbon, in less than three years after the adventure. Old Julian, I learned, expired, after four years confinement, in the cells of the Bastile. About a twelve-month after his death, I buried poor Benson, who had served me, with uncommon zeal, at Vienna, where he died of a fever. On his death-bed I

pressed him to confess, if he had deceived me relative to Olivia, but with his last breath he confirmed his former statement.

“Thus, like the airy personages of a vision, vanished, in a few years, the haughty Mortimer—the beautiful and accomplished Olivia—the astrologer Julian, and the libertine Collyer.—Thus, too, would the past events have left upon mind, only the faint impressions of a distant dream, had not one survived to keep alive the embers of revenge within my breast, mingling their foul fires with ambition’s brighter flame. Lord William remained the living record of defeat upon defeat, which Latimore had endured. His image was the stamp of reality upon what otherwise might well have passed for the faded counterfeits of fancy. To his, or to infernal agency,

agency, I also must attribute the embodying that damned spirit, which, assuming the shape and form of Julian, for these many years has shook the soul of Latimore. Listen to its origin. Not long after the interment of poor Benson, at Vienna, I was appointed Resident at Florence. One night it happened, that having devoted the whole day to writing the draught of some dispatches to England, I strolled to a retired grove, about midnight, for the refreshment of cooling air. I was alone. It was moonlight, and the bright star Jupiter was more than usually resplendent. I paused, and folding my arms, stood with my eye fixed on the star of my nativity, while a multitude of ideas floated across my brain. At length I uttered, involuntarily, an ejaculation—"Bright Promise of Glory, wilt thou deceive me?" "No," re-

plied a voice. I started. The spot where I stood was covered with trees, and after a moment's reflection, I concluded that some person, like myself; was taking the benefit of the air, and had uttered the response in a spirit of jocularly. Still I neither saw nor heard any thing near me, and was returning home, when the same voice addressed me—"Living Monument of Splendid Misery, say, where is Olivia—where is Mortimer?"

Ere I had recovered myself from surprise and horror, both were augmented by the appearance of a form which crossed the avenue. It was Julian of Rosenbergh, in the habiliments he wore, when living. As soon as my senses returned I drew my sword, and rushed forward in pursuit of this apparition, whether phantom
or

or reality, but it was vanished. The effects, however, which it produced upon my mind are, I believe, indelible. That night I slept not. In intervals of drowsiness I started from my bed; and horrid images of Mortimer—his death-wound bleeding, harrowed my soul. The next night my humiliation was completed. In a most horrid dream I had arisen from my bed, and pierced the tapestry of my room with my sword; at the same moment I awoke, and found my madness witnessed by a room full of terrified spectators, who, hearing a noise, had broken into my apartments. From that night Durand, whose deafness prevents his knowledge of any secret, that in my nightly dreams oft bursts these prison lips, has slept in my apartment. Repeatedly he has preserved my life from dangers, that, in the unconscious state of sleep, I have

have incurred by wandering.—For oh, my friend, the tortures of this breast are worked by sleepless devils, who night and day incessantly are turning the wheel of mental torments. But in spite of them I will proceed. Since the first vision of old Julian I have several times been haunted by the same appearance abroad, but never so publicly as at the Duchess's masquerade. At the moment I was overcome by surprise, but recollection has drawn consolation from the incident, for I am persuaded now of what before I doubted, that it is a stratagem to terrify me.—Yes, Elmer, I own, till then, so transient and momentary were the glimpses I had caught of this apparition, that my reason was not strong enough to resist the belief that it might be old Julian's spirit, or at least some phantom visible only to my diseased imagination.

But

But now I am assured—now I will pursue and will discover this tormentor; but caution must forerun our operations, and your aid in this business is essential. This discovery must be the first active step in that grand pillar, which you shall ascend with Latimore. Yes, my friend, your fate and Latimore's are now conjoined. We have together passed the Rubicon, and though necessity ordain oceans of the crimson fluid, that now runs through living veins, to overflow our path, the word is henceforth—"forward!"

"This last period of twenty years has been to me an age—a million of ages it has appeared, for I have seen that man, that Derrington, rising in glory and in power, whilst I have been, by the long lingering of my father's life, compelled to dwindle out my days in the simple anticipation of

of

of deeds I *would* do, when I became Earl Latimore. I now am Earl Latimore—I still hate Lord William, and I will destroy him. I live but in the hopes of attaining immortal fame, and of accomplishing my revenge in the death and infamy of him, whose hands foiled me in fight; of him who cheated me of the only love this breast e'er cherished; of him who now wields that power to which I was born—of the Premier Derrington. In these grand objects you shall aid me, Elmer. You are fit to be an instrument in so great a work. I have know and tried you. One thing alone is necessary to be atchieved by you—repress your own notions and ideas of right and wrong, gathered in your nursery and at your school. You have seen enough, even in the little that you have seen of state machinery, to be convinced the world don't move by such beautiful mechanism as cant-
ing

ing Priests and book-making Moralizers would have the multitude believe it does. "Wisdom is power," was wisely said by Bacon, and power is virtue, Sir, to all posterity. What follows then but, that we seize the reins, and so wield our power as to retain it, to our latest breath, and cause it to shed a bright renown around unmouldering monuments to the end of time? This will I do, or, failing to do this, will die a martyr to the glorious effort."

Here the conference ended.

CHAP. II.

A Dinner and a Concert.

AMONG the fashionable arrangements of the week, the Morning Post had announced for the day after Elmer's last conference—

*“Lord Latimore's Grand Dinner.—
Ladies Julia and Amelia's Music.”*

The latter of these entertainments was given in honour of the nuptials of the Colonel, their brother, who with his bride, and a party of her Dorsetshire

shire friends, had made Latimore House their temporary residence.

The former was a political dinner, preliminary to announcing some new arrangements in the Ministry, which had taken place in consequence of the arrival of the Earl of Latimore.

To the dinner table sat down Lord William Derrington, at that time Premier; the Duke of Derrington, his brother, who was President of the Council, and his son, the Marquis of Leverton, a Lord Lieutenant of the County of ———, Colonel of a regiment of horse, and Lord of the Treasury; the Secretaries of State, and most of the interior Members of Administration, with several of their chief parliamentary supporters, Nobles and Commoners; five or six of

of the opposition phalanx ; the whole male branch of the Latimore family, and, being his introduction, Mr. Elmer.

Previously to Elmer's entering upon this new career, the Earl had imparted to him some necessary *arcana politica*, and impressed upon him, with great force, some important cautions. " Reserve is the only fortress in which a political character is safe on such occasions as these," said he. " Sally out, and you are prisoner in some trap or other to a certainty. If you suffer the smallest avenue to your feelings or passions to be opened, you will yourself be assailed. Permit no breach, therefore, on the fortress of reserve ; keep it impregnable. It is the only safeguard of a statesman. You will see Lord William Derrington to-day ; it will, of course, bring to
your

your recollection the enmity I bear him, but you shall observe with what mastery of myself I shall receive him. Mark him—nay, all of them. Watch their lips, their eyes—look, listen, and remember; yet guard against the appearance of too much reserve.—Don't sit like the Duke of Silencia, whose taciturnity is as absurd as the garrulity of Will Martial. The one, by saying nothing decisive upon any subject, obtains the character of stupidity; and the other, by a vehement spouting of his feelings upon every subject, is notorious for his indiscreet developements, and his ludicrous expressions. Avoid too, especially, the fault of an ex-minister, who was characterised for a haughty indifference to the opinion of others. There is no mortification which a man feels so much, as to observe, by the countenance
or

or behaviour of the person whom he addresses, that what he is saying is considered as frivolous or uninteresting. The minister I allude to carried this *hauteur* to a disgusting extremity, and the consequence was, that though he certainly avoided many insipid remarks and common-place dialogues, he also lost much valuable information, and many an important secret. He may be conscious of a real superiority of intellect or knowledge, and yet prevent that consciousness from disgusting those who, we are sensible, are our inferiors. I make these remarks without apology, because I am aware that your good sense, my friend, will not blush to owe that to experience, which experience only can acquire. My youngest brother dines with us. He has all the honest openness of the British Tar, and, between ourselves, I think

think a full proportion of the indiscretion generally annexed to the character. Supposing, I imagine, that a council is to be rehearsed as we drink our wine after dinner, he has been with me to learn his que. I asked him if it is not customary among the higher classes of society to give publicity to an intended marriage by some entertainment to which the families and friends of both parties, and all the rest of the world, are invited, and at which the bride and bridegroom elect indicate, by their behaviour to each other, the approaching union. The purpose of the entertainment is evident to every one, yet the company do not take the opportunity of being assembled to sit down and publicly debate upon the pattern of the bride's wedding dress, or the colour of the bridegroom's liveries. Nobody

body chuses such a time to recommend a milliner to the one, or a coach-maker to the other. 'Tis the same thing, my fine fellow, to-day, continued I,—I have agreed to accept the office of Secretary of State. A party is in consequence made up, by which, from the personages present, the new arrangements are notified. But it would be preposterous beyond endurance were any one to attempt to convert a Complimentary Dinner into a Cabinet Council. There are, however, Elmer, hundreds as ignorant as Captain Latimore; there are men who would feel the keenest disappointment to rise from a table, round which all the members of the cabinet had been ranged, without having gleaned a single remark of higher importance than the state of the weather, or an opinion upon any topic more interesting than the

the flavour of the venison, or the age of the wine. Expect nothing more;—at the same time, be all eye and ear—and above every thing mark the behaviour of Lord William.”

At the appointed hour the noble and illustrious guests assembled. The entertainment comprised all that could invite the appetite, served in a stile of unrivalled magnificence. The most rare and costly dainties were scattered in luxuriant profusion on services of massy plate. Glittering epergnes were laden with the choicest fruits, and golden goblets sparkled with the richest wines. Behind each chair a liveried lacquey waited to catch the whispered wish, and to obey it instantly. Though nature at that moment had enveloped the earth in the gloom of night, and had chilled the descending rain to piercing icicles,

icicles, yet here a light, cheerful as the meridian sun, blazed from the trembling branches of superb chandeliers, and warm aromatic airs filled this saloon of splendour.

While many a houseless wanderer paced, with uncovered feet, the wet and flinty streets of the metropolis, seeking from charity a morsel to relieve the sufferings of hunger, here indolently wanton through repletion, lolled on their velvet cushions the sons of affluence and power, stretching their silk clad legs on carpets of embroidery.

Yet, though affluence may convert the gloom of night into the splendour of mid-day, and erect temples, from whence the inclemencies of seasons, and the wants of nature are excluded, we have seen, that neither
riches

riches nor power can so guard the heart as to render its avenues inaccessible to the inroads of misery. In the Lord of the Mansion himself we view a striking illustration of this truth. The splendid Idol of the Hour, he sat, as it were, enthroned at the head of his table. On each side of him were ranged the heads of the most illustrious and noble families in the empire, the most wealthy and respectable of the landed and commercial interests, and the first characters among men of genius and learning.—To the Earl of Latimore every eye was directed for opportunities of expressing homage; for among the whole groupe there were few indeed, to whom his favour was not necessary. Elevation of rank, or acquisition of riches, formed, in various degrees, the object which influenced the whole party, and each felt convinced,

vinced, that through Latimore alone could they arrive at those honours, or obtain that wealth, which stimulated their cupidity. Thus, in the estimation of all, he was a deity, commanding their most unfeigned adoration. The happiness of thousands appeared to be in his dispensation, and his own consequent felicity, estimated from exterior signs, elevated him to the highest pinnacle of Envy !

Yet was the houseless wanderer, exposed to hunger and inclement skies, rather to be envied than this nobleman. Warmth and a meal would render the vagrant happy, while this Sun of luxury, splendour, and power, eternally revolved on an axis of misery.

To the enquiring mind of Elmer
this

this new scene afforded busy occupation.—His quick ear caught the half-formed question, or half-whispered answer, while his penetrating eye finished, by a glance, both the one and the other. To the unfortunate Lord William Derriington he directed a large portion of his attention. He was irresistibly pleased with his physiognomy, and could scarcely repress a sigh, that his patron should be the determined foe of so much goodness as was displayed in his countenance. Elmer sat near him, and more than once detected himself in a reverie with his eye, unconsciously fixed upon the object of his thoughts.

No conversation of the least interest took place, until just before they rose from table, Colonel Latimore arrested the general attention, by relating, at length, the particulars of an elopement,
which

which had led to a forced marriage, and ended in a divorce, the circumstances of which at that time formed an universal topic of conversation. Some features of the story very strongly resembled the elopement of Olivia. Elmer, during the progress of the tale, alternately darted his eye from the Earl of Latimore to Lord Derrington, watching the effects it produced upon each. The former swallowed off with avidity a bumper of claret, knitted his brows to an expression of fury, and rose from his seat. The latter dropped a peach he was paring, drew his handkerchief, and, throwing his arm over the chair, turned his face from the company.

In a few minutes afterwards the whole party were in the drawing room, where tea was served, and where the dulness of the *sett* was relieved by a
mixture

mixture of more general society, formed of both sexes, who had cards for the concert.

The honours of the evening were jointly shared by Ladies Julia and Amelia. As the gentlemen from the dining saloon entered, they joined parties, or individuals, whom they recognised, and a scene was now exhibited, which combined with the splendid magnificence of the *Grand Dinner*, the elegancies of taste, the sprightliness of wit, and the fascination of beauty.

Among all the lovely groupes that graced the spacious apartment, none attracted so much attention as that which included the Duchess of Derlington, her daughter Lady Mary, Ladies Julia and Amelia Latimore, and Oceana.

Captain Latimore had seated himself

self near Oceana, and was exerting his talents to entertain her, when Lady Lustre came tripping towards the Duchess of Derrington with a paper in her hand. "O my dear Duchess," said she, "I have such an immense favour to beg, you've no notion, but I am perfectly sure your Grace will oblige me. You know I have been introduced to the Ladies Julia and Amelia Latimore, but then I could not presume to take the liberty to ask such an excessive great favour myself, but if your Grace will intercede for me."

"Pray, Lady Lustre, make no unnecessary scruples," said her Grace.—
"Here are the ladies—ask and have, without further ceremony."

Lady Julia bowed, and ironically good humoured, begged to know the
nature

nature of such an *immense favour*, such an *excessive great favour*, as she trembled lest she should have the *immense mortification* of being incompetent to the bestowal.

“ O no, its perfectly in your power, my dear creature, I assure you. I’ll tell you the whole story. You must know I have been on a penance of patience, these few days, at an old Dowager’s, a relation of mine, something between a sixth or seventh aunt, immensely rich, who lives, at all places in the world, upon Hampstead Heath. Well, my dear, there I have been compelled to sit and strum a wretched harpsichord to amuse the old soul, while she repaid me with hearty fits of coughing; quite a *hearty* cough, I assure you, she has, and not at all dangerous, only so shock-

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ingly unpleasant—Is'n't it provoking?"

"That it is not dangerous, do you mean?" said Lady Amelia.

"O no, no, no," rattled her Ladyship, "but let me tell you. Providence, I believe, saw my miserable condition with pity, and sent a most agreeable, elegant young fellow, on a visit to the old lady, at the same time. He had been twenty years abroad, and had not seen my old aunty since he was about twenty year sold."

"What!" exclaimed the arch Amelia, "Twenty years since the elegant *young* fellow——"

"Elegant, I assure you then, if not young," said her Ladyship; "but be he young or old, he's an admirable

mirable poet and musician. And to come to the point, you must know, I have herein my hand a most charming little ditty of this gentleman's writing and composing, which, with your Ladyship's permission, I wish to have introduced this evening. Miss Abrams has sung it over, and it is delightful pathetic. I mean to have it engraved — "*The Words by Lady Lustre, the Melody by a Gentleman of Distinction, and harmonized by Doctor Arnold.*" Now will you, my dear *Lady Conductresses*, permit Abrams to introduce it to-night? because then, you know, every body will be dying for a copy, and I shall make it as scarce as possible, and then people will *forge it*, as they did the Duchess of Derrington's tickets, or, if they do not, I'll forge some myself and say they did, and that will make it popular."

With as much gravity as she could command, Lady Julia assured this rattling candidate for fashionable notoriety, that her *immense* favor was granted, and round the room flew the silly flutterer, gratifying her little vanity by advertising to the various groupes, what pleasure they would receive from an original song of her own scribbling, "*the music was so divine.*"

A signal was given, and the company adjourned to the concert room. It was a temporary structure, fitted up with exquisite taste and convenience, ornamented with elegant and appropriate devices. The band was select, yet sufficiently numerous, and included the first scientific performers, public and private. The vocal parts were sustained entirely by public performers. A delightful glee, admirably supported

supported by Harrison, Knyvet, and Sale, opened the entertainment of the evening. To this succeeded an air, purposely composed for the occasion by Bianchi. It was a wonderful effort of genius, combining tenderness with strength of expression, in a style of brilliancy equalled only by the execution with which Banti enraptured her hearers.

Oceana, who was a perfect mistress of the Italian, and an enthusiastic admirer of music, listened to every note with an avidity of attention, that drew the observation of her surrounding neighbours. Occasionally her delight swelled into rapture, as the voice of this superior performer, in impassioned tones, struck her ears with sensations unfelt before,—for before she had never heard Banti. At these moments she
could

could not refrain from articulating her emotion.

At the conclusion of the air, a gentleman, who had fixed his eye upon Oceana during the whole time it was performing, addressed her :—

“ You are a true *amateur*, really, madam,” said he ; “ I perceive too, that the beautiful simplicity of the words was not lost to you—you understand the Italian, I am sure.”

Oceana did not immediately reply to this address. There was a frankness in it that differed from the disgusting familiarity of puppyism, which custom sanctions in the high world. The stranger who spoke to her seemed rather old than young, yet he looked respectfully in her face while he addressed her, without the aid of an eye-glass. There was altogether

ther something in his general appearance so commanding, yet conciliating, that Oceana felt a more than common interest for him and his opinion, and studied for a moment how to reply.

“ I have indeed, sir, experienced this evening, an additional cause of rejoicing that I *do* understand Italian.”

“ I was persuaded that you did,” said the stranger speaking in the Italian language. “ Excuse my freedom, but your face so strikingly resembles a friend now no more, whose memory will be ever dear to me, that I can’t help troubling you with another question—Have you been in Italy ?”

“ Never, sir !” replied Oceana, in the same tongue.

“ And

“And your parents—were they—not—Italian?”

“No, sir, it is my grateful boast that they were English.”

“Do they live?”

“You remind me of the only affliction I have known—the death of the best of mothers.”

“But your father lives?”

“O yes, I trust so,” said Oceana, with an emotion at once expressive of gratitude and affection.

“Happy father!” exclaimed the stranger, with a deep sigh, and turning away his head he wiped off a tear.—He sat on a seat below Oceana, and next to Lady Mary Derrington, who per-

perceiving his handkerchief applied to his eyes, rose in pretended petulance, exclaiming to Oceana—

“ Pray, Miss Melville, what have you been doing to my uncle ?”

“ Your uncle !—Have I been conversing then with the Premier, in ignorance of the honour ?” said Oceana.

“ Even so, indeed,” said Lady Mary, “ and I believe, by his looks, my uncle will also own to similar ignorance, if not to similar honour.”

“ Who is that interesting young creature ?” said Lord William, in a whisper, to his niece.

“ Why, uncle, you seem smitten,” replied the young lady. “ I have a

great mind not to tell you—nay, don't look so angry, I will—then you must know it is Miss Melville."

"Well, well, child—don't trifle; I am serious—who is Miss Melville?"

"I vow, my dear uncle, I can scarcely tell you, but Lady Julia Latimore, there, will give you her whole story, for they are a pair of sentimental inseparables. Miss Melville is now here on a visit; she comes from some queer corner of the island or other, I really forget where. She is vastly admired, and intolerably flattered—I declare I know not for what."

During this specimen of the levity of Lady Mary's heart, Lord William muttered—

"Latimore"

“Latimore”—“Corner of the island.” Then fixing his eyes again upon Oceana—“Yes, it must be so. Villain—infamous villain !” With this exclamation he left his seat, and hurried to another part of the room.

By this time an overture of Haydn’s was begun.

Oceana could not attend to the performance. Her eye wandered after Lord William Derrington till she lost him in the croud. “What can he mean ?” thought she. “Whom does he thus denounce villain ?” Her mind insensibly fell into a train of thought, from which, however, she was aroused by the voice of Lady Lustre.

“Oh, my dear, I am in such a *tremulation* ; my piece is the next to be performed: I have been telling
every

every body it is mine, and, would you ever have guessed such a thing? the queer wretch who gave it me at my aunty's is here in this very room. I am sure it is he, though he has made himself look fifty years older by muffling himself up in an odd kind of cloak. Only look at him; that's he talking to Lord William Derrington—I know him by his voice, and, I assure you, I verily believe he's a spy, or an ambassador *incog*, and I verily believe they are planning some mischief against Lord Latimore and you."

"Lord Latimóre and me!" exclaimed Oceana, extremely embarrassed.

"Why, my dear, they said you must be somebody—I don't know who; and that Lord Latimore kept you in
a secret

a secret corner, I think, but only caught half sentences, The conclusion, however, is this :—The queer fellow said, “ the song will try his conscience ; fix your eye upon him, and you will mark his guilt.” “ But how did you contrive to have it sung here ? ” said Lord William. “ I gave it Lady Lustre,” replied the other, “ and I then knew it was accomplished.” “ Now, my dear Miss Melville, if this creature should claim his song, after I have printed my name as its author, what shall I do ? ”

“ Oh never fear,” said Oceana ; —“ Your Ladyship’s invention will not desert you in the hour of need. But pray have you a copy of the song ? ”

Instead of replying to the question asked her, (a ceremony Lady Lustre seldom

seldom attended to) her Ladyship exclaimed—"Do, for Heaven's sake, Miss Melville, only observe how the creature is staring at us—at you I mean. He seems to take an uncommon interest in you—perhaps he's a relation."

"Indeed I never saw him before," replied Oceana, "and I am persuaded he cannot even know me."

"But do you not observe what expressions of surprise—how they point to you, and whisper, and, nod, and wink at each other? My dear girl, there must be 'some secret worth knowing.' I'll go and listen, positively."

The curiosity of her Ladyship was disappointed, for at that moment
her

her constant swain, Charles Scavage, who had just entered, discovered her, and insisted upon leading her to a vacant seat in a distant part of the room.

Her Ladyship had scarcely quitted her seat when the person, of whom she had been speaking, walked up to the spot which she had left, and, accompanied by Lord William, stood so near to Oceana, that she could now and then hear sentences of their discourse.

The overture was concluded, and a general buz ran round the room, announcing Lady Lustre's song. When the symphony began—"Now mark!" said the unknown to Lord William.—Lord William leant upon the shoulder of his companion, and they both rivetted their eyes upon
the

SPLENDID MISERY.

the Earl of Latimore, who was seated on the other side of the room, exactly opposite the station which they had taken.

The Earl was in conversation with Mr. Elmer and the Marquis of Leverton. The plaintive melody of the music arrested universal attention. A general silence ensued, and the eyes of the Earl were turned towards Miss Abrams, who gave every possible effect to a song, which, under the mask of fiction, narrated the fate of Olivia, and the murder of Mortimer.

While almost every other ear was ravished with "softly sweet" sounds, Oceana could only listen to Lord William and the stranger, and her eye was directed by their remarks to Lord Latimore, who sat actually
writhing

writhing with torture. The moment the song was ended he took Elmer's arm and hurried out of the room, evidently in pain.

"He feels—he feels," exclaimed the stranger to Lord Derrington. "There is yet hope, my Lord. Leave the rest to time and to me. I have a stratagem yet in reserve that I think cannot fail—Come, come."

Lord William gazed tenderly on Oceana, and seemed unwilling to go. "May I not say adieu?" said he to the stranger.

"You must not trust a syllable out of your lips at present. Come, my Lord, come." And by gentle force he attempted to draw him out of the room.

Oceana

Oceana was lost in astonishment, and for a few minutes remained insensible that she was just then the object of admiration to two beaux, who were applying their glasses in a most critical examination of her features. Lord William pointed them out to his friend.

“No Venus, I think, Sir George,” said one of them in a loud whisper that startled Oceana.

“An angel, by G—,” exclaimed the other. “What a pity she’s so d——d poor. Not a sixpence I’m told.”

“So much the better—I’m glad to hear it,” rejoined his friend; “but how the devil are we to get introduced?—Oh here comes her tutelar Saint, *the Derrington* herself.”

The

The Duchess glided by these beaux, deaf to their "Your Grace—your Grace," and beckoning Oceana with her fan, left the room. Oceana was following, when Sir George, bowing with an air of gallantry, offered his hand to escort her. She declined it—Sir George persisted.

"You are troublesome, Sir George," said Lord William.

"You are officious, my Lord," was the answer.

"For Heaven's sake, Gentlemen," said Oceana, as she struggled through the croud to the door, followed by Sir George and his friend, and Lord William and his friend, "spare yourselves this trouble—I beseech—"

"Has

“Has Lord William, Madam, any authority to—”

What Sir George would have added, as well as much probable consequent mischief, was happily prevented by the unexpected appearance of the veteran Melville.

“My dear father!” exclaimed Oceana, springing forward with an impulse of filial joy. She caught hold of his arm with eagerness, and hurried out of the room.

“Her father!—Mysterious Powers,” exclaimed Lord William, as with his friend he left the room.

“Her father!—*Mischievous* Powers, I say,” cried Sir George, as he reeled round with his companion, and again mixed with the crowd.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

OCEANA's letter, in which she described the Sleep-Walking scene in the library, had occasioned the journey of Captain Melville to London. Struck to conviction, as he thought, by the exclamation of Lord Latimore, relative to Mortimer and Olivia, he never for a moment permitted himself to doubt either that his Lordship was the father, or else that he knew who *was* the father of his adopted Oceana. Fired with the benevolent zeal of restoring the child to its parent, he had resolved in the first instance to write at once to Lord Latimore the particulars of Oceana's history. The more prudent Hanbury, however,

ever, who was at that time the Captain's guest and confidant, suggested a more cautious line of conduct.

“Wait the next letters of Oceana,” said he. “Further particulars will transpire which, in all probability, will elucidate the mystery, and either strengthen or annihilate your suspicions. Besides,” added Mr. Hanbury, “admit that the Mortimer and Olivia, known to Lord Latimore are the same which your imagination suggests, still I know not that it is matter of rejoicing. He declares in his sleep, that he slew this Mortimer. In that case it is surely rather to be wished that Oceana should for ever remain ignorant that she is under the roof of her father's murderer. And after all,” concluded Hanbury, “the adventure may turn out nothing more than one of those coincidences
of

of names and circumstances that frequently occur in life, and almost as frequently deceive."

The advice of his friend had been adopted by Captain Melville. He waited. Two or three letters, however, arrived from Oceana, but, in compliance with her promise to Lord Latimore, no further mention was made of the adventure in the library. Still the coincidence of the names worried the imagination of Captain Melville, and at length he resolved to visit the metropolis for the express purpose of "*sounding the depths*," as he termed it. Hanbury cautioned him against even hinting to Oceana his real object in coming to town. "Cruel, indeed, my friend," said that good man, "would it be, to strip the dear child of that sweet delusion, which now is, as the reality

lity to her affectionate heart, unless you were sure you could supply the vacuum by bestowing a permanent reality."

"True, true," cried the Captain, "leave me to my discretion, and my affection for Oceana will not suffer me to put any thing to the hazard."

Such was the state of Captain Melville's mind, as he encountered his adopted daughter in the concert room.

Oceana's heart bounded with rapture at his appearance. She was conducting him to her own dressing room, when in crossing the saloon, they met the Duchess of Derrington, who was returning to the music room.

"What magic has detained you
thus

thus long, child, after my fan told you that you might follow me?" said her Grace.

"An attraction more powerful even than your Grace's favour—the unexpected appearance of a dear father!—Give me leave to present Captain Melville to your Grace. The Duchess of Derrington, dear sir."

"Apropos—most apropos. You are Captain Melville. Sir, I congratulate you as the possessor of a treasure, infinitely more valuable than that of old Jephtha, Judge of Israel, which, you know, was "a fair daughter." *Your* daughter is fairest among the fair, and you have arrived precisely at the proper moment to help her in the decision, whether to accept the half of a mitre, and the hand of a Bishop, or the dignity of a Viscountess ;

tess; or whether she ought not to prefer the pounds sterling of Mr. Charles Scavage, who *weighs heavier* than either the Bishop or the Viscount."

"O, your Grace, your Grace—spare my poor father," said Oceana with a smile.

"O, pretty little innocent! How I envy you that blush, sweet novice; but don't look *too new*, child, for, as I love Casino, I speak the simple, sober truth. I beckoned you to take you home with me. I intend to keep you till to-morrow evening, and by that time I shall be sufficiently informed of your Highness's will and pleasure respecting these slaves to your charms, whose delegate I have the honour to be. We will then, sir, lay our treaties before you for your approbation, and

and an early day shall be fixed for the ratification."

Oceana was about to reply.

“Hold your tongue, child,” said her Grace, playfully placing her fan upon Oceana’s lips. “I understand perfectly your feelings, and, as Charles Surface says, ‘It’s all very true, Brother Joseph, as you were *going* to observe.’ Thus would your sweet sensibility express itself:—“My father has travelled two hundred miles. I have scarcely spoken to him. I have not introduced him to Ladies Julia and Amelia. What will they think of me? What will my dear papa conceive of his graceless daughter, to run away from his embrace at the very moment when it is in his power to bestow it?” And in this strain, my dear, would you

F 2

preach,

preach, to the great loss of your time, and, what's infinitely worse, to the painful trial of my patience. Now I'll arrange the whole in the single whirl of a curricule wheel. *Imprimis*, Captain Melville has travelled two hundred miles to embrace his daughter, and he shall not be disappointed. There, Sir, as many kisses as you please in one minute—not a second more.—Now having travelled two hundred miles, and not, as I imagine, in a vehicle so éasy as an air-balloon, I shrewdly conjecture, Captain Melville, that you must be weary; therefore I prescribe, to be taken immediately, “*une bon repos*,” a sovereign remedy for weary limbs. So *bon repos, bon repos*, my dear Captain. Call up my carriage—Come, Miss Melville,”

Though Oceana was by no means
a vir-

a virtuous *miracle*, yet she possessed a very fair proportion of virtuous feelings, and sound rational principles.—She, therefore, not only felt the impulses of virtue, but had generally sufficient fortitude to obey its dictates. On the present occasion she was firm to the impulse of affection.

“Your Grace must excuse me,” said she in a tone of resolution,—still holding the Captain’s hand.

“*Must* excuse you!” echoed the Duchess with a look of surprise. “Why is the man a tyrant? Captain Melville, do you accustom yourself to these nasty words—*must, shall, shan’t, won’t, &c.*”

“I have never yet had occasion to use such expressions *here*,” said the

the Captain earnestly shaking the hand of Oceana. "But if she persists in refusing the society of the Duchess of Derrington, for a dull tête-à-tête with an old fellow like me, I shall be compelled to say she *must not*. Seriously, I shall repair to my hotel immediately. I wished but to see and embrace my dear girl to night, and in the morning I will answer all those questions which I see in her enquiring eyes."

"You are a superlatively sensible man, Captain Melville," said her Grace, "and seeing that it be so, I hereby privilege you to attend my toilette in the morning as early as you please, where I promise you your daughter's company. But what's the matter now?"

A servant approached Oceana:—

"Lord

“Lord William Derrington’s compliments, and requests the favour of five minutes conversation with Miss Melville, in the library.”

“My compliments to Lord Derrington,” said her Grace, “Miss Melville is stepping into my chariot, and will be proud to receive his lordship at Derrington House. Is the carriage up? Captain Melville, can we set you down?”

Before the Captain could answer, or Oceana had recovered from her surprise at the request of Lord William and the easy assurance of the Duchess, another door of the saloon opened, and Mr. Elmer entered. Addressing himself to Oceana—“Lord Latimore, Miss Melville,” said he, “requests the favour of seeing you in the library. He will be there immediately.”

“Why,

"Why, Oceana," exclaimed the Duchess, "this is absolutely a *Scene*. What is intended to follow?"

Oceana changed colour at the message of Mr. Elmer, from an innate dread of encountering the Earl.

Captain Melville observed it. "Shall I accompany you, my love?" said he.

"Oh no,—by no means," replied she; "but don't go till I see you again.—I—you—"

"I see your distress, child," said the Duchess. "Well, well, go to the mysterious Earl. Captain Melville, give me your arm—I'll introduce you to Julia and Amelia, and all your *sons in-law* that *would-be*. Elmer, lead to
the

the concert-room, and do let my people be told to drive round the square for an hour."

Trembling with apprehension, Oceana bent her steps to the library. The servant had not yet delivered the Duches's answer to Lord Der-
rington.—He was, therefore, wait-
ing in the library, and upon
Oceana's entrance, rose and accosted
her.

"This obliging condescension, Madam, commands my gratitude. I am desirous—very desirous, of asking you a few questions, not from an idle spirit of curiosity, but from motives, which, if I could expose them, would *very* powerfully plead my excuse."

"My Lord, I—I—"

“Forgive my interruption, but I have objections of being discovered here in private with you. Will you grant me half an hour at the Duchess’s, my sister, to morrow morning? My motives, I repeat, will justify my request, but on no account at *present* would I have Lord Latimore know that I have even seen you in private.”

“At that instant an opposite door of the library opened, and Lord Latimore, who had heard the last words of Lord William, appeared.

“Derrington!!!”—“Latimore!!!”—exclaimed each with mutual surprise. The Earl stood motionless, but his face flashed anger and revenge as he darted his fierce eyes alternately on Oceana and Lord William. The conviction of the moment was, that
a con-

a conspiracy was in agitation against him. Oceana, ignorant of the emotions of either, stood lost in astonishment.

“You seem surprised, my Lord!”
at length said Lord William.

“Is there no cause for surprise?”
said the Earl. “Is it an every-day occurrence in domestic life to meet enemies and spies in one’s own private dwelling? I own I *am* surprised. Rivals, as we have long been, from your *rank*, Lord William, I expected a more honourable species of warfare than this.—’Tis so paltry, so mean a resource, sir, to enlist into your service these agreeable companions to young ladies of distinction, for the purpose of gleaning family secrets.”

Lord William’s astonishment was increased.

creased. His impression was, that Oceana had played him this trick, or at least was made the means of this detection.

“ Do *you* understand the Earl of Latimore, Miss Melville?” said he turning to the trembling Oceana, “ if Melville, indeed, be your name,” added he, with a sneer, and a significant look at the Earl.

“ Oh, that was admirably played,” said the Earl, scornfully; “ but the trick is too stale, and I have happened to detect a few words: ‘ *On no account would I have Lord Latimore know that I have even seen you in private !*’ Did I dream that I heard these words, Miss Melville, *if Melville, indeed, be your name,* or did Lord William talk in his sleep ?”

Oceana

Oceana sunk into a chair, overpowered by the violence of her feelings.

“ Till lately,” said Lord William, “ I have omitted hypocrisy from the catalogue of Latimore’s crimes; but he is, I perceive, not only a practitioner, but a professor in the art,” pointing to Oceana, “ Poor unfortunate,” continued the mistaken Lord William, “ I had hoped that the images of virtue and simplicity, so strongly delineated in your countenance, were emblems of your mind, and that from your frankness I might receive that intelligence, which I now despair ever to obtain. I am painfully disappointed; yet I pity you. I love you for the resemblance you bear to one, whose excellencies once formed this heart’s full enjoyment. Oh God, where is she now
screened

screened from my just reproaches? Oh Latimore, destroyer of my happiness, where, where is the still loved deceiver? You may waste all the power of rhetoric in repeating the story of your ignorance, but when I find such a perfect copy as this in your possession, it is conviction itself to me, that the original has been at your disposal."

Oceana, who listened with surprise, almost amounting to distraction, to this dialogue, essayed several times to speak. When Lord William paused, she again attempted to be heard.

"Nay, nay," interrupted Lord William, "spare yourself any unnecessary apologies—I see your situation. Your dependance upon Lord Latimore is the strongest plea that
you

you can offer. I perceive you are acting under his instructions, though, probably, poor child, you are as ignorant of her fate, as I am myself."

"Of whose fate—pray, my Lord, hear me, and answer me—of whose fate—of whom speak you?" said Oceana.

"Of whom, indeed!" said Lord William. "O, child, you drive me to distraction. If you are indeed ignorant of my meaning—apply there—to him—to him, who can alone unravel the melancholy fate of the fallen Olivia."

Lord Latimore started. Oceana was more than ever agitated and astonished, and Lord William, casting a look full of meaning at the Earl, darted out of the library.

"Fool—

“Fool—idiot—madman!” exclaimed Lord Latimore. “And you,” turning to Oceana, “how am I to address myself to you? Who, and what are you, that thus, at every moment, you are exciting my curious suspicion, and yet every moment seem more deeply veiled in mystery? Will you continue, after this detection, to assert your undesigning innocence, or do you mean to brave me with the ascendancy you may imagine you possess over me in the knowledge you have obtained of my secret malady? What injury has Latimore ere done to you, or yours, that you should league yourself with his tormentors, and thus repeatedly inflict upon him the misery of the damned?”

“My Lord,” said Oceana with an air of dignity, yet in a trembling voice, “I am at a loss in what manner
to

to reply to you. This strange and unmanly deportment of your lordship, to a female under the protection of your roof, I cannot otherwise account for, than by a supposition, that the feelings of your heart, under the impression of some violent grief, deranges, for the moment, the faculties of your understanding.—On that ground I have not only refrained from resenting unmerited reproof, but have sincerely compassionated the malady that has occasioned it.”

“ You ! you compassionate it ! By heavens, that countenance cannot be the varnish of hypocrisy. If I could believe it ;—yet it were worse than infatuation to be duped by it, after my own ears have heard the appointment of a secret meeting.”

“ The

“The proposal of Lord Derrington then is the ground of your suspicion, that I have violated the promise I gave your Lordship. I declare to you, my Lord, that though the oath of secrecy was exacted from my lips by circumstances which left my will no choice, and therefore, in my mind, may be dispensed with without a breach of moral obligation, yet the conditions of that oath have been hitherto as scrupulously adhered to, as had the vow been voluntarily offered, at the altar of that Omniscient Being, whose ministering Angel now records my declaration.”

The Earl was affected—tears trembled in his eyes.

“Oh, there is a stamp on innocence, a seal on purity of heart,” said he :

“I dare

"I dare not—I cannot doubt such a declaration from such lips. Yet still—what brought Lord William here? Why does he desire to see you privately?"

"His desire to see me at the Duchess's, doubtless, brought him here; but why he desires that interview, if you, my Lord, cannot conjecture, how should I, who, till this hour, never exchanged a word with Lord William Derrington; nor, to my knowledge, ever beheld his person?"

"Strange—wonderful!" said Lord Latimore. He paused—he seemed to debate with himself. Then walking across the library, and locking both doors—"You have not then, Miss Melville, betrayed my infirmities; you have not leagued with my
direst

direst foe.—I entreat your pardon. My suspicions have wronged you. I had learned from my Secretary, that the Song, introduced this evening by Lady Lustre, came through the hands of a stranger, who appeared to be the companion and friend of Lord William. That song was penned purposely to torture my recollection and harrow up my soul.—Elmer informed me further, that during the concert, this Lady Lustre was in close discourse with you, and that Lord William and the stranger were continually nodding and pointing to you.—From these facts arose a most painful suspicion in my mind, and I desired to see you, that I might, at once, candidly explain my fears, and put you on your trial. Judge, then, my emotions when I heard at the door the voice of Lord Derrington, urging a clandestine interview !

interview! My suspicion was instantly converted into conviction, and his appearing to be unacquainted with your real name, and his pretending to have discovered in your face a resemblance to —— I say all this seeming hypocrisy only added to my conviction, that you were the instrument of his rooted malice against the fortunes and fame of Latimore, which, I know, he envies. Your manner, your voice, however, have totally undeceived me, and I myself now do really think that I can trace the very lineaments which strike Lord William as resemblances of Olivia.”

“Of whom said you, my Lord—Olivia? Forgive me, if I pain you by my curiosity:—May I ask who was the Olivia I so much resemble?—Pardon me, I perceive the question has affected you;

you; I will, with your permission retire."

"Excellent young creature," said the Earl. "How much have I injured you by my suspicions! No, do not leave me. I feel more consolation from your tenderness than words can describe.—Thus much of Olivia, my dear, once for all. She—was—an Italian lady—of elevated rank and beauty. Her mind was resplendently stored with all that can captivate the adoration of mankind. This lady was beloved by Lord William Derrington—beloved also by me. The attachment has been a source of misery to us both. It has made Lord William wretched, but upon me—oh God—upon me it has heaped torments insupportable by mortals. It has kindled such a consuming fire in my breast, my brain, that no fancied torture
which

which frights imagination can be supposed to inflict such misery, as that I bear about me, beneath the show of pomp and power. It poisons all my senses, unnerves my powers of reason—transforms the means of happiness into insulting mockeries, and shades the glowing beauties of creation with the sickly hue of wasting desolation. It palsies the strong arm of power that might awe a world, till in the impotence of infancy it cannot grasp a rattle. All that my waking vision scans is disappointed hope and mortified expectation. Regret and horror follow in my rear, and agonizing apprehensions float before me. And when the more congenial darkness of the night envelopes me, *then* am I happy?—No, no, no.—For me nature has no “soft nurse.” Sleep has no balm for wounds heart-deep.—Nightly I view, squatted on
cornices

cornices of gold, the filthiest imps, who chatter, grin, and point at me. The costly draperies of satin seem the horror-speaking walls of inquisition-cells, where hideous phantoms glare in fancied flames. My couch of down feels to my perverted sense, a bed of heated iron. If even for a moment slumber shuts out these horrors, then come the busy fiends, whose office is to procreate upon the brain images of disquietude and horror. Then, Olivia, do I see thy form, thy charms.—Swift the transition, and the concentrated evil of Latimore, in the persons of Derrington, and his pander, Mortimer, stands before him. I wake, or rush unconscious to my imagined enemy:—I seize my sword, and murder o'er again the villain, who—”

Here he stopped short, fixed his eyes
on

on his auditor, attempted to imitate a smile, waved his hand o'er his head, and said :—

“ I ramble—I dream, even now :— but the tender apprehension your looks express recalls my wandering senses. You have beheld the horrors I have described ; you will not, therefore, wonder at their impression, even on my waking thoughts. What is the boasted power of human reason against the operations of the heart ? It is a dwarf in fetters against a giant armed ! But, I must recollect myself. Fate has again, you see, thrown you, Miss Melville, in the way of listening to these effusions, which I have not the power to controul. I am loath to offer any thing like terror to a woman, still less to one so innocent, so kind as you, and least of all, to one who with propriety has reminded me,
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that she is under the protection of my roof. Yet there is a chord in my composition, of such a nature, that if the gentlest touch should strike it, the vibration would drive me instantly to despair, and I should use this weapon—how, it is not necessary to particularize.”

As he spoke he drew from the inside of his waistcoat a small dagger.

Oceana trembled.

“ That chord to which I allude, none living can touch, save you. You would do it, were you to whisper a syllable respecting the disorder of my mind.—Remember who I am; reflect in what class of beings I stand, and wonder not at my determination, firm as the base of universal truth, never to suffer the million, who gaze at Latimore, as at a Deity, to behold
his

his misery. Having explained my resolve, I will add one caution—beware of Derrington. There is a connection in the destinies of Latimore and Derrington. The strange coincidence of your residing here, and your resemblance, for I now see it myself, to Olivia, has fired his curiosity. As you value existence, shun his enquiries. Do not trust yourself a moment in his society. He possesses the art of insinuation to perfection. He is far from a contemptible rival to me—to you he would prove a most dangerous intriguer. I repeat what I observed to you, Miss Melville, in my study, that Fate, and not my Will, has forged these fetters for you, and I regret that the delicacy due to your sex, is thus forcibly thrust out of my consideration, by imperious circumstances. Happily, however, Fate has not been blind in the choice of her victim,

but has chosen a female, in whom all the softer graces of her own sex are combined with a strength of intellect, that would confer honour on any human being. Act then consistently, Madam, and Latimore will be grateful."

Oceana replied in the best manner she was able, under such singular circumstances, and after some further cautions, and a repetition of the importance of secrecy, they separated. The Earl wrote to Lord Derrington, with the design of rectifying his impressions respecting Oceana; and Oceana sought the society of him whom she regarded as a father; into whose bosom she panted to disemburthen her mind, and receive parental instruction in return, a pleasure from which she was deterred more by compassion than fear. She pitied, from
her

her heart, the state of mind of the Earl, and dreaded the effects of acting in opposition to his wishes, far more on his account than her own.

CHAP. IV.

Epistles.

WHEN Captain Melville quitted his cottage, his friend, the excellent Hanbury, and his daughter Emma, returned to the Parsonage House of an adjoining town, where Mr. Hanbury held the living. At parting, a correspondence was arranged, from which the following letters are extracted, as containing, perhaps, a more lively, and certainly a more natural detail of the progress of the events, which connected the history of the writers, than the most laboured efforts of their historian could produce.

FROM

FROM CAPTAIN MELVILLE TO THE
REV. MR. HANBURY.

AFTER a jumbling journey, my dear Hanbury, I have, at last, the satisfaction of saying that I have embraced the dear girl of my adoption. I arrived late in the evening at Nerot's Hotel, delivered the cargo of my post-chaise, paid the freightage and passage, then instantly ordered a hack, and drove to Berkeley-square. With some difficulty I obtained admission. There had been a grand dinner, and a concert was then performing. The *hall footmen*, as the fellows stiled themselves, stood at the door, and received tickets from the visitors, exactly in the same stile as the box-keepers, at the theatres, on a benefit-night. I had no ticket, but as I was fortunately in my uniform, and introduced myself as the father of Miss Melville, I passed the barriers, and
was

was left at liberty to follow the croud. I wandered about some time from room to room before I obtained a sight of my Oceana. At length, in a place, for all the world like a chapel without a pulpit, I saw her. She was leaving the apartment, and in a transport of joy and affection, leaped into my arms. At that moment, however, I was the happiest of men. I had, however, scarcely embraced her, when we were interrupted by the Duchess of Derrington—all life, spirits, and animation. Her Grace was carrying off my dear girl in triumph, when my Lord Derrington, her brother, desired to see Oceana, in the library, on particular business. At the same moment came a well-looking young fellow, the Secretary of the Earl of Latimore, with a request, also, to see Oceana in the library. All this seemed strange to me, and you may be sure
the

the mention of the library brought fresh to my memory the nocturnal peregrinations of this mysterious nobleman, by which title he is as well known, it seems, as by that of his earldom. 'Tis many years ago now since he and I slightly knew each other, I was, therefore, anxious enough to get a peep at him, and offered to accompany Oceana to the library. She declined the offer, as I thought with peculiar emotion, and went alone. In the interim the Duchess and I returned to the concert room, where I had the pleasure of again meeting, in Ladies Julia and Amelia, two of the most amiable young women I know, *my* Oceana and *your* Emma, of course, excepted. There were other Ladies and Lords out of number, whose names I never heard of before, but who were as intimate with me in the space of three minutes, as if we had

cruised the whole voyage of life in company With the youngest of the Latimores I am delighted. He is frank, generous and brave, and how could he be otherwise when his school has been the Royal Navy of Britain? In about half an hour Oceana joined us. There was an appearance of anxiety in her countenance, and I took an immediate opportunity of withdrawing with her to enquire into the cause. "The Earl was a singular character," she said, "a strange, suspicious being, jealous of every whisper, and every look. At the same time there was so much mystery in his own words and actions, that the character of his mind was inscrutable. Oh, my dear sir," continued she, "how unfortunate it was, that I should have been in the library, when he unconsciously uttered such horrid exclamations." "Why unfortunate, my dear girl?"

girl?" said I. "Because it has roused the jealousy of his nature, and has induced him to watch my motions with a suspicion that pains me."

"Does he then know that you were his auditor?"

"Sir!" she exclaimed with a blush.

"My dear Oceana evades my question. Perhaps it was improper," said I.

"Oh, sir—oh, my father," cried she, the blush upon her cheek increasing, and with more confusion in her countenance than I had ever beheld before!

"If I have pained you, my dear child, forgive me," said I. "There
are,

are, perhaps, particulars connected with that strange incident, which you have not thought proper to confide to me."

She burst into tears, and at length acquainted me with the following particulars* :—

.

Now, my good friend, what think you of all this? Lord Derrington, and the Earl himself both acknowledge a strong resemblance between Oceana and Olivia! Does not this discovery strengthen the supposition that darted upon me like lightning, when I

* The passages thus marked are omitted as containing merely a repetition of circumstances detailed in the preceding pages.

first

first read the names of Olivia and Mortimer? I cannot doubt for a moment, but that Olivia was the mother of Oceana.—Good Heavens, what a miraculous discovery! And yet she, poor heart, little dreams of any consanguinity between herself and this Olivia, who so dreadfully disturbs the peace of mind of Lord Latimore. Nor would I for worlds instil into her mind the most distant notion of my own feelings on this subject. It is of most serious importance. If the murdered Mortimer should prove to have been the husband of Olivia, I agree with you, that it were better to bury all our surmises in eternal oblivion. If, on the other hand, as I incline to believe, the Earl himself is the father of Oceana, I hold it a task imposed upon me by Providence to compel him to acknowledge his daughter, and nothing shall deter

deter me from the performance of such a sacred duty.—Lord William Derrington bears a most excellent character, and if I could unburthen my mind to him, his advice might serve us essentially. But you perceive that I cannot ask his advice in a direct manner, without, as it were, *bastardizing* my poor Oceana, which I will never do, unless I can restore her to her real father. So that at present I must be content to cruise on the look-out. I am, at any rate, on the right station, and if I once catch a glimpse of the proper signal, damme, but every timber shall start before I give up the chase. I shall endeavour to glean a few particulars from Lord Derrington, in a round-about way, as opportunity offers. There is also a Mr. Elmer, whom I mentioned before. He is an excellent young fellow, and has lived with this queer, sleep-talking nobleman

man several years. I'll manoeuvre with him too. Nay, in such a case as this, I shall think myself warranted in intriguing with the very servants. The Swiss, Durand, is one of the most *grotesque* figures I ever beheld. His whiskers alone are enough to terrify a man of moderate courage. He is more than six feet high, and wears the hussar uniform. There are two obstacles to my obtaining any information from him.—He is as deaf as a beetle, and to me he is dumb, for he jabbars nothing but French, which you know I don't understand. Still I don't give him up.—Caution, I agree with you, is absolutely necessary, and I will not put the happiness of my Oceana to hazard. I am at present with my friend Morrison, but shall be in a state of constant activity respecting the great object of my journey. You shall hear from me frequently.

frequently. My letters will be left for you at the post office, to prevent the curiosity of your dear Emma. I have commissioned Oceana to write you both, instead of me, so that my supposed silence will not seem remarkable. I carry the little book, *Milton's Paradise Lost*, constantly in my pocket. It is a relic that I cannot help considering as invaluable.—May the rulers aloft carry me well thro' this voyage of discovery, Hanbury, and then they may send down sailing orders for the port of Eternity as soon as they will. Old Melville will obey them with pleasure, and resign his mortal commission with gratitude for the past, and a humble hope for the future.

OCEANA MELVILLE TO MISS HANBURY.

WITH what alacrity do I fly to my pen, in obedience to the commands of my dear father! "Write, my dear, every particular," said he, "to *your* friend Emma; she will impart her intelligence to *my* friend Hanbury, and that will relieve me from a task to which my inclination and talents are but little adapted. I am not so presuming as to think my talents for epistolary correspondence superior to my dear father's, but my inclination to please my Emma renders the execution of this task the most pleasing duty imaginable. Nor let me conceal the selfish part of my motive to cheerful obedience, for I expect in return from you, my dear, line for line.

Already has my imagination converted you into a Lucy Selby, in the country, and transformed myself into a Harriet Byron, in town. I mean *only*
a scribbling

a *scribbling* comparison, for I am, by no means, so well satisfied with myself as to admit the vain supposition of a resemblance of person, mind or virtue. And if I were weak enough to assume the character, I should still be at a loss for supporters to carry on the drama. Alas, where, my dear girl, at the existing period, shall I find a Sir Charles Grandison? I am not surprised to hear it observed that the character is out of nature, for undoubtedly, according to the present exhibition of characters in the high world, it is *out of all drawing*. — Since my arrival in London I have been introduced to so many noblemen and gentlemen of rank and fortune, that I feel justified in forming my own estimate of the fashionable world; and certainly, nothing like the Sir Charles Grandison of Richardson have I seen. So *outré* is the character deemed in the fashionable world, that I have found
but

but one solitary exception to its general condemnation as a monster of perfection; and that exception, I fear, is of small weight, as it appears in the person of a Mr. Elmer, originally in the humble capacity of an amanuensis to Lord Latimore, but lately raised to the respectable situation of his private Secretary, and honoured with a seat in parliament, and at the council board, as filling some subordinate place in the government. This gentleman is not ashamed to acknowledge in public company, that he is of opinion a man may fulfil every relative and individual duty in society, according to principles of Religion and Morals, which his heart feels, and his understanding sanctions. I have heard him repeatedly contest the point with a degree of success, that assures me he himself is, at least, desirous of imitating such an example; and I respect him most sincerely for evincing
such

such a disposition. But the very contrast of a Grandison is the character now assumed by our young men of fashion. Principles of every sort are confounded with prejudices, and the *doubting system* is carried to such an extreme, that it is actually vulgar to be *convinced* of a difference between Vice and Virtue. How those, who are honoured with the rank of parents in society, contrive to regulate their views in the inculcation of moral knowledge, would amazingly puzzle me, did not the daily Journals teem with advertisements of new systems of education, conveniently adapted to the *reigning meteors* of Philosophy, as they annually, or even monthly blaze and explode.

But the exhibition of the great world at London, my dear Emma, shall henceforth be its own commentator.—Placed by circumstances in the very
focus

focus of fashion. I am determined to copy the interesting Panorama of Men and Manners, that every day presents itself to contemplation in this vast capital; and the painting, if it suffer not materially by the imbecility of the copyist, will convey to your mind more truth than can be gleaned from volumes of axioms.

In my letters to my dear father, I have given you such general outlines of the portraits of the Latimore family, as render any further labour upon them at present unnecessary. The finishings, the lights and shades of characters, will be best supplied by the course of circumstances. The Earl himself more and more interests me. His disease of mind is daily more apparent. He becomes fretfully suspicious, and less cautious in the display of his painful jealousies. What event may be connected with

with the names of Mortimer and Olivia, I know not, but it appears to be the source of his malady. Since the adventure in the library, several trifling incidents have occurred, which, in connection with that event, have awakened a degree of curiosity in my bosom, which mingling its influence with the pity that I already cherish for the sufferings of this mysterious nobleman, will render him an interesting object of my future observations.

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To-morrow morning I am to accompany Ladies Julia and Amelia to the villa of her Grace of Derrington, at Richmond, on a visit for a week. The occasion of this visit will excite a smile, my Emma, or it may, perhaps, occasion a serious reflection upon the nature of
matrimonial

matrimonial treaties among the great.-- Lady Julia, you know, has long been *betrothed* to the Marquis of Leverton, the heir of the House of Derrington—that is to say, the Duchess has been so assiduous in her labours to effect the match, that Lady Julia, some time prior to the death of the late Earl, had yielded her assent, the Marquis had acquiesced in the wishes, or rather the commands of his parents, and had paid the *quantum sufficit* of public attention to Lady Julia. They have been partners at a game of Whist. They have danced together in public, and twice the Marquis has been seen in the same box with Lady Julia, at the opera. The arrival of her brother, the Earl, having facilitated the necessary arrangements of the settlements, &c. &c. the marriage-day has been decreed for to-morrow fortnight, and the Duchess insists upon this *domestication of a week*,

as

as she terms it, for the purpose of arranging wedding dresses, and future equipages and establishments. The younger Meriton is invited for a week: his talents render his company a *desideratum* in every party, especially where dulness is anticipated, and the idea of retirement from London in the month of March, for the space of an entire week, cannot be wholly unassociated with prognostics of *ennui* in the minds of a lady of fashion. The Duchess has therefore, secured young Meriton. She has most obligingly pressed an invitation upon my dear father, but the business which has occasioned his journey to the metropolis, prevents his accepting it. He is at present the intimate of his particular friend, Colonel Morrison, who married the *Indian* Miss Orme, as she is stiled, from the immense fortune which descended to her from her uncle, an Indian Judge.

They

They are people of very *high ton*; their establishment vies with the most splendid in town; but, my dear Emma, I am far from sure that their happiness is commensurate with their splendour.—I shall soon have occasion to introduce them to your acquaintance. My next letter will *fly* from Richmond. “Oh, excellent *Inventor* of *Mail Coaches*, how do I honour thee !”

OCEANA MELVILLE TO MISS HANBURY,

Richmond.

THE Duke of Derrington, my dear, who was purposely at the villa, met us at the entrance of the lawn. I have already described this nobleman's character. Had I not been previously acquainted with it, I should have read it with ease in his plump round face, and his little twinkling eyes, where the easy indifference, not to say apathy, which reigns in his breast is displayed in very legible characters.

Upon this, the most important occurrence of his life, the nuptials of his heir, his Grace has wonderfully deviated from his general habits. He has sacrificed the pleasures of a favourite and very celebrated hunt, and the society of a set of the *jolliest dogs* in the kingdom, for the dull decency of devoting a week to his daughter-in-law elect.

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With a proper sense of the frailty of human resolutions, however, his Grace has prudently weakened the trial of his patience during this week of penance by sharing the post-chaise, which brought him from Yorkshire to Surry, with an agreeable dependant. We were accordingly introduced to the reverend Mr. Knowles, a clergyman of the *Turf*, *alias* a sporting parson, whose disposition and manners are so perfectly in unison with his Grace of Derrington's that he was never known to be more than a *neck* behind his Grace at a fox chace, nor to flinch from obedience when his patron hiccupped "one bottle more." Had not his Grace *said* the *Reverend* Mr. Knowles, so little of external reverence was visible in his broad laughing countenance, and jockey-like dress and manners, that I should never have supposed a person, habited in buckskin boots, a jean grey frock, a white

hat, lined with green, sitting with a pointer between his knees, was either Bishop, Priest, or Deacon. There happened to be seated in the same room a most striking contrast to this reverend sportsman—the Abbé de la Pan, an emigrant under the patronage of the Duchess. A more meagre form I never beheld, and so remarkably tall, that Lady Amelia could not resist whispering me, that she thought he would make an excellent grenadier in a regiment of skeletons. His dress was as ridiculously inconsistent, though in a different style, as his reverend brother's, and the affectation and servility of his manners are even more disgusting than the rude stare, and irreverent grin of Mr. Knowles.

“What a precious pair of parsons,” whispered Lady Amelia. “Let us quiz ‘em a bit, Melville.” “Fie, fie, Lady Amelia,”

Amelia," said I. "I will, poz," replied she.

"Pray, Mr. Knowles, have you read the controversies so much talked of relative to the effects of instituting Sunday Schools?"

"Quiet, Juno—quiet, I say," cried Mr. Knowles, and pretended to slacken the dog's collar.

"Controversy, Milady—ah *certainment*," said the Abbé, quickly supplying the deficiency of the English pastor. "It seem de grand design—splendid notion, to diffuse knowledge among the ignorant; but ah non, it fomentis discontent among the labouring classes of society, and sews the seeds of——"

"What did you say about seeds, Sir?" interrupted Mr. Knowles.—"I beg

beg your pardon, but did not you say something about sewing of seeds?"

"Seeds of *dissatisfaction*, I allude to, Monsieur," said the Abbé in a French accent.

"Seeds of Fashion—I never heard of them," said Mr. Knowles.

Amelia laughed out, and every body smiled. Mr. Knowles whistled, patted Juno, rose, and left the room. The Duke followed him.

The Abbé took snuff with an air of contempt and triumph, that seemed to say—" *The Brute!*"

Just then the Duchess arrived, accompanied by Lady Mary Derrington. "Here, Monsieur l'Abbé," said Lady Mary, as she entered, "take poor Sappho,"

Sappho," and she delivered to his care a pretty little French dog. Her Ladyship then nodded to me, as a ceremony of course, which she could not omit, but which was reluctantly performed.

I have, on several occasions, noticed the invariable *hauteur* of this young lady; whether I apply it to myself in particular without just ground, I know not, but the daughter is the very reverse of the mother in her deportment towards me.

The Duchess is herself proud of her rank and birth, but possesses the secret of concealing it from common observation:—Lady Mary not only is but *appears* to be proud.

It was proposed to shew me the paintings, the house, and the grounds.

“ Do,

“Do, my dear,” said her Grace to her daughter, “endeavour to entertain Miss Melville. I have some business of importance with Ladies Julia and Amelia of a family nature, and which must be very insipid to every body else.”

Lady Mary pouted. “If Miss Melville will do me the honour,” said she with a curtesy, “I will do *mon possible*. Monsieur l’Abbé, will you do me the kindness to give poor Sappho some biscuits and cream, as I am *prevented*?”

I was piqued. “Oh no, by no means, Lady Mary,” said I. “It would burthen my conscience to be the cause of your neglecting poor Sappho; and really I have letters to write which I ought to have written yesterday. I must, therefore, postpone the pleasure her Grace designed me, at least for a few hours.”

“You’re

“ You’re a good creature, Melville,” said her Grace, “ I love you more and more.”

“ Can that be possible ?” said Lady Mary with a sigh. “ I should have thought, Mamma, your affection for Miss Melville could not admit an increase.”

“ You would do well then to imitate the manners that are so fascinating,” replied the Duchess.

In an instant, Emma, I saw the cause of Lady Mary’s coolness towards me. I felt excessive pain at the discovery. Innocently and ignorantly, I had become an object of jealousy to the daughter, who, I perceived, considered me as a rival in the esteem of her mother.

Lady Mary made no reply, and I instantly left the room, took possession of my apartment, and have scribbled thus far. I must now, however, lay down my pen, and prepare for my appearance at the dinner table.

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I had scarcely sat down to my toilette, when Lady Julia tapped at my door. She is greatly to be pitied.—With her excellent disposition, her talents, and fortune, who would suppose that she could be unhappy? The nearer, however, that the day approaches which is to consign her person and fortune to the Marquis of Leverton, I have observed an air of pensive melancholy more and more clouding her lovely countenance.

tenance. "Oh, my good friend," said she just now—"oh, my dear Melville, tell me—am I doing rightly in submitting to this—affair—this marriage?"

"Submitting, Lady Julia?" said I, with an emphasis.

"What else can I call it?" replied she. "The Marquis—is—very well.—He is—I mean I have no *particular* objection to him, but——"

"But what, dear Lady Julia?—You make me unhappy. For Heaven's sake unburthen your mind to me, if you deem me worthy of your confidence—indeed I have observed a melancholy of late."

"Oh no, I hope not—surely not."

"Do

“ Do not be alarmed, my love, the eye of friendship is quick, and observant. The general observer, I dare say, has not noticed it.”—“ But if my brother should—you know my situation, my dear friend. If he should suspect my aversion to this union ?”

“ Your aversion ! Have you then an aversion ?”

“ Perhaps that is too strong an expression. I mean to say, that my heart is not in this match. My inclinations were never consulted. I have been disposed of—portioned off—and he, to whom I am consigned, knows this, and acts accordingly. He has never sued for my favour. He has not even conducted himself towards me, as if he considered my approbation of him at all necessary. How can I expect happiness with
the

the man as a husband, who, as a lover, is the emblem of indifference?"

I was silent—indeed, my dear Emma, I was puzzled in what manner to reply. There was force and truth in her observations. Yet such matches are so common in high life, or rather the reverse of them is so rarely seen among the great, that to decline entering into the married state till a reciprocity of affection cements the *convenient conjunction* of establishments and estates, is almost to resolve upon celibacy. With the impression of this fact upon my mind, I considered it my duty to be cautious in my observations.

"You are silent," my dear Melville, continued her Ladyship. "It is prudent, it is worthy of your character. You cannot defend these alliances ;

alliances; and after things have gone so far, you cannot, of course, advise me to retreat, let the consequences of the union prove ever so unfortunate."

"Pardon me, Lady Julia. Till the arrival at the sacred altar—nay, even there I hold it not only an advisable step, but an incumbent duty to retract all promises, if there be sufficient causes."

"Do you indeed?"

"Undoubtedly. But how can this apply to you, my love? What cause can you assign? Come, come, I must examine this palpitating heart of yours, for I suspect this rising repugnancy to an eligible settlement in life, to be nothing more than that reluctance to quit the scenes, situations, and

and habits we are accustomed to, which is a natural, and, I believe, universal feeling."

"Ah, my dear Oceana, I, at least, indeed feel this reluctance."

"And so you would, were you about to espouse the most favoured object which your fancy can paint. Who can quit their native roof, the smiles of parents, and the familiar faces of those around them, for a new home, a new relation, and new duties, without a sensation approaching to painful?—The happiest brides, my dear Julia, often give vent to this feeling in tears at the altar."

"Oh that is a transitory tear, my Oceana, and the feeling you so truly describe

describe is as short-lived as the tear
where *hearts are united*."

She spoke the last words with uncommon pathos. "You are grown romantic," said I. "Where have you been reading about *hearts united*? Yet do not tell me. I know we may read of abundant of examples for a guinea a year. If you could, indeed, point my observation to a pair of these united hearts among any of our acquaintance I should like to examine them."

"Can that be necessary to the daughter of Captain and Mrs. Melville?"

"A very elegant compliment—I thank you, my dear, but allow me to remark, that the revered example you quote, is not in point. You have proved too much, as a logician
would.

observe. The union of their hearts was the gradual growth of years of conubial intercourse, and, by no means, one of those astonishing collisions, which I have *heard* sometimes take place between the hearts of a young lady and gentleman, at the first sight of each other. Seriously, my friend, I am convinced, from the little observation I have been able to make, as well as the most intelligent information I have received, that happiness in the married state is by no means the peculiar and exclusive reward of enthusiastic lovers. I believe the calculation would be in favour of prudential alliances, rather than *Love-matches*, if a scale of conubial happiness could fairly be made."

"You reason with the coolness of a Plato, my Oceana,"

"I am

“ I am speaking with the sincerity of a friend.”

“ Then you think love is of little or no importance among the ingredients of matrimony ?”

“ I have not said so, I believe, nor do I mean to insinuate such an opinion. The extent of my argument is, that in order to enjoy happiness in the married state, it is by no means necessary to possess that ardour of love for the object of our choice, which amounts to the vehemence of passion; since there are many pleasing instances of happy union, where no previous passion was pretended, and but too many sad examples of infelicity, where love has been gratified in its choice.”

“ The inference of your argument then, if I understand it, my love, is
this—

this—that though I marry the Marquis of Leverton without feeling any passionate attachment for him, we may yet *turn out* a very *agreeable couple*.—Well, it may be so. It shall be no fault of mine that makes it otherwise. Yet still, dear Oceana, I cannot help murmuring in *your bosom*, that I do think there are men in this world with whom I should be much, much happier.”

“You think there are men, Lady Julia? Come, come, my love, you are consulting me as a mental physician, and remember how truly important it is, that I should be made acquainted with the *whole* of your case. It is one thing to marry a deserving man without feeling any violent attachment to him, and another, to marry one man while you cherish a passion for another. —You blush, my friend. Let me conjure

jure you, as you esteem my friendship—as you value your future happiness, to balance well the real feelings of your heart at this moment. I have seen the Marquis only two or three times, and know him very imperfectly. His character I understand to be greatly superior to the generality of young men of fashion. His person is, certainly, unexceptionable, Tell me then, candidly, in one word—Is there a man whom you know, and would prefer as a husband?—You hesitate.”

“ Really—indeed—I cannot answer you in one word.”

“ Then take the whole dictionary, my dear, but let it be to explain, not disguise, your answer.”

“ As I observed before, I do think there are men.”

“ Why

“Why speak in such general terms? Say at once—“ I do think there is a man.”

“Hush, dearest Oceana, for Heaven’s sake. If my brother should suspect—if the Marquis—good heavens, I am acknowledging what I would have wished to conceal; yet your eye sees my heart, and I am sure you would have discovered it, and then, perhaps, you would have despised me as a creature guilty of duplicity! No, I will not incur that hazard. I will rather risk your esteem, your love, by the exercise of a virtue, than the commission of a crime. It is painful to confess what may perhaps lower me in your esteem, but it would be worse than mean to deceive you. I do, yes, dearest Oceana, I *do* think there is a man, whom I should much prefer to the Marquis of Leverton, as a husband.

band. There is such a man. I know him—I love him.”

Having thus, with considerable pain, declared herself, Lady Julia buried her face in my bosom. I felt much more compassion than prudence permitted me to display. I rallied my spirits, and in a sprightly manner inquired the name of the man who was honoured by the love of Lady Julia.—To my astonishment she replied—

“ You know not what you ask.—Ah, dearest Oceana, excuse my revealing it. I have resolved never to mention it. I shall submit to my fate—I *must*. Our union is, both to the Marquis and to me, a point of honour.—That conviction alone is of sufficient force to bind him to me, and me to him. But even if this
barrier

barrier were by some miracle removed, even then, my friend, such is my singular destiny, that a union with the only man, with whom I could be happy, is that which I ought not to desire."

I paused a few moments. Then assuming a very serious air and manner—

"Lady Julia," said I, "must excuse the frankness of her friend, when she declares her astonishment at hearing such childish sentences as these. We have long been the repositories of each others sentiments and secrets. When we were younger than we now are, we were accustomed to ridicule such a blending of feeling and principle, such a romantic mixture of sentiment and sense as you have now uttered. It pains me extremely to hear Lady Julia Latimore exclaiming like the heroine of some
German

German romance, that the only union which could render her happy, is "*the very one which she ought not to desire.*"

It is, certainly, consistent with such a declaration, my dear, to envelop your allusions, as much as possible, in mystery, otherwise I should ask for an explanation."

"I cannot bear your ridicule, even though I believe it to be forced. No, Oceana, I must not descend so much in your opinion, as that you should think I want *treating*. I am not yet, I trust, so much fallen from a consistent character. Do not then *treat* me, or *play* with me, as if my mind were distempered or childish. It is neither ; and yet I would repeat to you all that I have observed. I do declare, that while I shall certainly marry the Marquis of Leverton, I would much rather have been the wife of one far inferior in rank. At
the

the same time, I declare, that if my hand were at my own disposal, I would never betray to the individual to whom I allude, the slightest symptom of my tender regard."

"Why not, let me ask?"

"Because I have reason to think that his heart pays homage to one, whose happiness is as dear to me as my own."

"To Amelia!"

"No,—To Oceana."

I was electrified by the sound of my own name. Surprise—nay, shame seized me; for at that instant a consciousness of Lady Julia's meaning was impressed upon me, as if by inspiration. My cheeks glowed, my

sought the ground, and my speech forsook me. With astonishing energy Lady Julia appeared to elevate her mind, in proportion as mine sunk before her.

“Now is it my turn to preach, Oceana,” said she. “It was my intention never to have pronounced a name to you, that, I was well aware, would excite just such emotions, and occasion just such symptoms as those you now betray. Some power of love or magic has invalidated my resolution, and when I spoke of one, whose heart paid homage to Oceana, I instantly associated in your mind that homage and the recollection of Mr. Elmer.”

I was about to speak.

“Nay, hear me patiently as I listened to you : it is the only time I shall ever
speak

speak to you on the subject. Whatever
 you may say, or all the *Rationalists*
 in the world may preach, my friend,
 there is such a thing as falling in
 love at first sight. Educated, as I
 have been till lately, in the bosom of
 retirement, a mind, not entirely
 without powers, has enjoyed the
 means and the opportunity of expand-
 ing itself by thought, and strength-
 ening itself by knowledge.—With a
 much larger share of philosophy,
 therefore, in my composition than
 generally falls to the lot of a young
 woman of fashion, I quitted the soli-
 tude of retirement for the crouds of
 the metropolis. The Marquis had
 always been pointed out to me as the
 destined lord of my person and for-
 tune. Till the day of my brother's
 arrival, I had never seriously regretted
 this mode of *betrothment*, for I had
 heard and seen enough of the Marquis

to know that he was free from flagrant vices; that he was polished in his manners, and benevolent in his disposition. Besides, the affair was only distantly pointed at, and I never had seriously investigated the probable consequences of what was only probably to happen. Of late, however, the affair has assumed a different aspect. The arrival of Mr. Elmer has presented to my mind another view of the married state, than that which I had previously contemplated. The first moment that I saw him, I was struck with the noble openness of his countenance softened by a dignified modesty. Every hour that succeeded to this, his countenance has been present to my imagination—I have compared it with all others that I have seen, and have uniformly preferred it, as an index to such a heart as I most admired. Opportunity of conversation

tion ensued. I found the promise of the countenance more than fulfilled. I found the mind of Elmer benevolent as his face portrayed it, and intelligent far beyond what the youthfulness of his features permitted to be described there. How much did I esteem him! His company became more than entertaining; it was strengthening to my mind. His absence was not merely the loss of a pleasure, but the sense of a weakness. My spirits were not simply depressed, they were enervated. When I encountered the Marquis, it was no longer with indifference; when our union was mentioned, it filled me with horror. The nearer it approached I detested it the more, and incessantly compared my future prospects with the Marquis to what they might have been with Mr. Elmer. Such, dearest Oceana, was the state of my heart.

If

If you tell me I was in love, you acknowledge that there is such a thing as love at first sight for the sentiment that now warms my breast was kindled the first moment I saw Mr. Elmer. Unfortunately, when my brother, at his arrival, questioned me upon the subject of a preference, I had then no motive to desire his influence to supercede the pretensions of the Marquis of Leverton, or rather of his mother.—Since that audience, when the noble spirit of my brother bestowed an independence upon Amelia and myself, how often have I regretted his generosity.—The sudden death of my father, who died intestate, left us both unprovided for. Till the liberality of my brother was known, how the attentions of the Duchess relaxed. Had he still kept us in dependence upon his bounty, I should never have suffered her returning importunities ;

nities ; I should never have been at this villa, on such a dreadful business ! Yes, Oceana, dreadful, for though I no longer suffer myself to dwell on the prospect of a life I might have enjoyed with Mr. Elmer, now I know that he loves one far more deserving than ————”

Tears, which she had long attempted to suppress, here prevented her proceeding. You will imagine, dear Emma, better than I can describe, my feelings at this moment. My heart was pierced. I still held down my head, leaning on my elbow, and shading my eyes with my hand. I could not utter one word. She soon proceeded.

“ Now do not look upon me as a rival, dearest Oceana. Do not let me lose the only hope of comfort I have left

left me. Do not rob me of your *own* love. A few more days will place the possibility of——”

Here I interrupted her. “I must not listen to this rhapsody, dear Lady Julia. You told me just now your mind was not distempered, but forgive me if I think differently. How else can I account for your incongruous discourse? You allude to Mr. Elmer and to me, as if we were betrothed lovers, instead of the mere acquaintances of a few weeks. I will imitate your candour in acknowledging, that of all the persons I have seen since my arrival in London, I really do believe Mr. Elmer the most entitled to my esteem.—But must it follow that I am in love with him? Still more slender, if possible, is your reason for supposing him attached to me, because in general conversation
there

there happens a coincidence of opinions, that may command some degree of mutual attention."

"Oceana," said she, "I have stronger proofs than you imagine. I have marked you both with a quicker perceptibility than you have observed each other. Do not, from delicacy to me, hesitate in doing justice to the natural candour of your disposition. Remember *I am not now* a lover. I am more of a philosopher than you think me. I can subscribe, more unreservedly than you imagine, to the arguments you advanced in the beginning of our conversation. I have unburthened my mind, and feel already animated by motives of a superior nature. Henceforth the only incitement to action, which I shall obey, will be the sense of duty. I relinquish, for ever, all re-

gret at your happiness, and I despise myself, that I could for a moment have indulged it. I now ask your opinion, if I may blamelessly accompany the Marquis to the altar, after such a confession as I have made to you, until I have previously stated the sentiments I have cherished for another."

I was prevented from replying by the abrupt entrance of Lady Amelia, who, with her usual flow of spirits, marched up to us with a martial air, singing "*Ca ira, ca ira, ca ira.*—"*Vive la bonne Duchesse*—More weddings, my girls. Glory to the High Priestess of Hymen, the indefatigable Duchess of Derrington. But why so *melpomonish*, Julia—Oceana too? Pray, Ladies of soft and melting souls, may I be honoured with the information of what new effusion of sensibility,

lity has spread that air of pensive sadness o'er your brows, and caused the pearly tear to glisten in your lucid eyes?"

"Madcap," said I, "your time will come."

"'Tis even now at hand," replied she, in the same playful strain. The ring, the priest, the bridegroom are prepared, and I have nothing left me—but to marry."

"What does she mean?" said Lady Julia.

"I mean, my grave and eldest sister Julia, that the Duchess of Derrington, in the kindness of her heart, has had compassion upon poor me, a spinster, lest when I see you dandling three or four young Marquisses, En-

vy should feed upon my damask cheeks.
In short, I am going to be married, as soon as I have accomplished one task, equalling in difficulty and danger the labours of Hercules."

"And pray what is that?" said I.

"It is nothing less than this—to tame a Democrat! Don't be frightened, but he is to be let loose this very day at dinner. I shall clip his talons, muffle him, and make him so tractable an animal, that he shall be admitted into the house without danger, and when that is achieved, the Marchioness of Leverton shall call him brother-in-law."

"You sport too much, my dear Amelia, with serious subjects," said Lady Julia. "Do tell us in plain language

guage what you would seriously wish us to understand."

"I will," resumed the incorrigible Amelia. "Hast thou not heard of Winterton, whose name strikes terror into the Aristocracy of Britain; the thunder of whose voice unroofs St. Stephen's Chapel, and the fierce lightning of whose looks singes the Speaker's wig—the staunch declaimer of the People's Rights; or, in more figurative terms, the Lantern of Democracy?—Him, the fierce Winterton, has her Grace kindly selected for my future spouse. To-day he dines here with your Lord elect. They are arrived, and even now await our coming!"

The second dinner bell is now actually ringing.

Before

Before closing my letter I have just time to say that upon joining the party, Lady Amelia seated herself next me at table, and upon the first opportunity pointed out to me "the Winterton," as she stiled him. "There, child," cried she, "that's the being who terrifies our English alarmists as much as the "*Great Devil*" does the poor Genoese. Look at him."

Never, certainly, my dear Emma, was there a *first appearance* that so completely disappointed me. Take his portrait—a very genteel, tall, slender young man, with an effeminate face, the forehead and eyebrows shaded by locks of hair, unpowdered, but *not unperfumed*, for, I assure you, as he approached us, we exhaled all the essence-formed vapours of a lady's *boudour*.—Round his neck were folded as many yards of fine muslin as would

would make the Grand Signior a turban. From his shouldērs was suspended a pair of richly embroidered pantaloons, tied at the ancles with silk ribands sufficiently high to display a silk stocking with gold embroidered clock."

"Is that Mr. Winterton?" whispered I to Lady Amelia.

"E'en so," said her Ladyship.—
"That's the grand advocate of the *Jacobins*, though he himself is, as you perceive, rather more of a *Muscadin* than a *Sans-culotte*. Nothing *terrific* about the man, but his *Brutus*."

"And pray, Lady Amelia, are his manners in correspondence with his appearance?"

"O. exactly."

“ O exactly. He is effeminacy itself; and, between you and I, I verily believe his democracy proceeds from nothing but a *womanish* love of *talk-
ing* and *contradiction*. His amusements are all effeminate. He touches the piano better than Clementi, and will whine out an Italian canzonet with the grace of a Billington. He is prime manager at several parties of Private Theatricals, a notorious loungee in the way of the scene-shifters at the Opera-house, and never breathes the air but in the corner of a sociable, shaded from the sun by his sister’s parasol. Under all this childish folly Winterton conceals from the world a heart full of benevolence, and an understanding by no means contemptible. I mean, in the first place, to make a man of him, and then marry him. So that you may consider *him* as *my*
Lord

Lord elect. Now here comes Julia's."

My attention was immediately turned to the Marquis of Leverton. My former opportunities of noticing this young nobleman had not enabled me to form any opinion of him in any degree equal to his merits. Young Meriton, Mr. Winterton, the Marquis, Ladies Julia and Amelia, and myself, kept together the whole evening. Excepting Lady Julia, the whole party seemed delighted with each other's society, and to me, at least, the hours have appeared to fly on swifter wings than usual. Lady Julia might surely have been very happy with the Marquis, if she had not unfortunately beheld Mr. Elmer with such favourable eyes. He seems to me possessed of every requisite of person, mind, or manner to constitute him an object worthy of
any

any woman's admiration. In my next letter I will attempt the description of the Marquis of Leverton, my dear Emma. In the mean time you may suffer yourself to *think* of him as highly as possible, and you will not be much disappointed in your expectation, if you even picture to yourself a modern Sir Charles Grandison, which, considering *our* notions of that example of human dignity and grace, you will allow is the climax of praise.

Adieu !

OCEANA.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

An Explanation.

THE character of the Marquis of Leverton is to be classed among those few specimens of human excellence, which still remain to cheer the eye of contemplation in an age of almost universal depravity of taste, and general dereliction of principle.

He was born two or three years before the death of his grandfather.—Fortunately for the infant, whose mother was a woman of fashion, the six first years of his life were passed under the roof of the Dowager Duchess, his grandmother, an excellent disciple of the old school. This good lady constantly

stantly superintended the nursery of her grandson, while the mother, in the levity of her young and gay heart, fluttered in a drawing room, the admiration and the envy of the fashionable world.

The Marquis had attained his seventh year ere he was so fortunate as to attract the peculiar and valuable regard of his uncle, Lord William.

That Nobleman returning to England from a fruitless search after the lost object of his affections, the Lady Olivia, with a heart half-broken, and a spirit bowed down by bitter disappointment, had almost become a misanthrope, when two objects started to re-animate his expiring affections, and inspire him with a new stimulus to action. The one was the distinguished favour of his Sovereign, who, in opposition

sition to the influence of the late Earl of Latimore, appointed him to an office of great confidence in the government, which called for the exertion of all his talents; and the other was that zealous friendship, which he imbibed for his young nephew, the Marquis.

He met with him at his mother's the Dowager, and was at once impressed with a conviction of his enlarged capacity and excellent disposition, while at the same time he regretted that such natural good qualities should be neglected, or, perhaps, corrupted by the apathy of his father, and the frivolity of his mother. He determined, therefore, to obtain the superintendence of his education, a task which neither father nor mother repined at his undertaking, as it was scarcely the subject of a thought with either.

To

To this circumstance are to be attributed those excellencies which graced the character of the Marquis of Leverton, and distinguished him from the multitude of insignificant triflers, and impious libertines which unhappily disgrace the higher order of the people of Britain in the eighteenth century.

From his boyish days to the present hour, the Marquis had cherished for his uncle an affection founded on gratitude for his kindness, and mingled with admiration of his virtues and his talents. The most unlimited confidence subsisted between them. Not a thought was disguised, not a motive concealed by either from the other. The improvement, the perfection of his nephew was the ruling passion of Lord William, and to be worthy of the commendation of his
uncle

uncle was the prime object of the Marquis.

On the subject of his approaching nuptials with Lady Julia, long and frequent conferences had been held between the Marquis and his uncle. The amiable qualities of her mind, and the graces of her person precluded the possibility of forming any exception to either, and the affair proceeded, as is customary in the high world, rather by the agency of parents and friends, than by any advances on the part of the bridegroom elect, or any allurements of the intended bride.

The advice of Lord William had uniformly been in favour of the match, as well because it was the united and heart-felt wish of the Duke and Duchess, as that he deemed it a suitable establishment in life for his nephew,
whose

whose heart had never felt any impression of preference for another.

Such was the fact, when as yet he had not beheld Oceana. The first time he saw her, he was pleased with her face and form, her deportment and manners. When a second time he found himself in her company, his attention was fixed on Oceana. His eyes rested on her countenance. His ears listened exclusively to her voice, and his heart beat responsive sentiments to those which fell from her lips. It was then, for the first time, that he drew a comparison to the disadvantage of his intended bride. It was then, for the first time, that his heart sickened at the recollection of his intended union, and he began to doubt if it ought to take place. In this spirit it was, that he arrived at the villa of her Grace of Derrington. In this spirit it was, that he

he perceived the more than coolness of Lady Julia, and, as he flattered himself, the attention, at least the notice, of Oceana. The opportunities of more narrow observation, which the nature of the party and their amusements at the villa, bestowed, were not lost on the Marquis. With every hour his admiration grew, and two days of the week had not elapsed ere he became so deeply convinced of his preference for Oceana, that, in the candour of his disposition, he instantly wrote to Lord William on the subject. He pointed out to him the ground of his former acquiescence, which was the vacant state of his heart, and declared that it was now occupied by a preference, which, he hoped, would not be condemned, for he confessed it was impossible to eradicate it. He enumerated the excellencies of Oceana's mind, and painted, in glowing language, the

beauties of her person, referring his uncle for a *faint and inferior* resemblance of the latter to the "portrait of his *favourite Italian, in the study, at Salt-Hill.*"

To this letter Lord William replied thus :

"I have repeatedly cautioned you, my dear Leverton, against the effects of an impetuosity, which I deem the weak part of your composition. You resolve too hastily—I grant that, in general, you determine rightly, but such sudden ebullitions, from however pure a source, I consider weaknesses. "You are *determined* to put a stop to the proceedings relative to the match with Lady Julia," you tell me. And now let me enquire into the cause of this *determination*, and I shall find it in the boyish fancy, which at the first sight has delighted itself with the face
of

of a stranger. You describe her excellent qualities, not only in the language of poetry, but as I should conjecture, of prophecy ; for certainly the slender acquaintance you have of this Oceana, cannot warrant the strongest eulogies you bestow, and I therefore conclude you speak with the tongue of inspiration. There are, however, false prophets among us, and I shall not marvel, if in respect to this fair-seeming maiden, even you, my dear Leverton, should prove among the number. To speak seriously, for indeed your letter has awakened most serious reflections in my breast, I have reasons, and those too of a very painful nature, to believe that this Oceana Melville, as she is called, is the disciple of the arch hypocrite, Latimore.

“ You tell me that you have discovered a resemblance between her,

and the portrait, in my study, at Salt Hill. I too, my dear Leverton, have felt that resemblance, and it has renewed those painful sensations of memory which I flattered myself time had destroyed for ever. You have often witnessed my contemplation of that portrait, till the tear of bitter recollection forced its passage from my eye. I have long since perceived the curiosity which has been kindled in your bosom, and the time is now arrived, when it is absolutely necessary, from the tenour of your letter, to impart to you some interesting particulars of the early part of my life, with which not only that picture which resembles her, but, singular as it may appear, this new object of your admiration, this Oceana herself, are closely connected. The story I am about to confide to you, my dear Leverton, has hitherto been registered only in my
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own breast, and that of a most tried, and valued friend, who has been himself a principal actor in the scenes I shall describe.

“ At a very early age I travelled in company with my mother and this friend, who was also considered as my tutor. We had traversed a considerable part of the South of Europe, when the health of my mother occasioned us to take up our residence for some time at Bologna. At this place we formed a most agreeable intimacy with one of the first families there, that of the Marquis Della Zoretta. The sole heiress of that illustrious name and magnificent fortune, was—the original of that portrait, to which you allude in your letter. Her name was Olivia —————

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The letter of Lord William then stated the outline of those events connected with the history of Olivia, Mortimer Sydney, and himself, antecedent to the death of the Duke his father, and then proceeded thus :

“ No sooner had the tomb received the ashes of my departed father, than I immediately left England in pursuit of the supposed traitor, Mortimer, and the faithless Olivia. I published, in Italian, an address to the latter, in every European paper. I wrote to Lord Latimore in the most humble terms, imploring him, in pity to the sufferings of my almost broken heart, to state to me the truth, and to impart to me his advice. He persisted in an avowal of his belief, that Mortimer and Olivia dwelt together on some part of the continent, and urged me to erase such unworthy objects from my memory.

memory. All search was fruitless—all enquiries were in vain, and I, at length, felt compelled to credit a story of treachery and infidelity which I had, till then, persuaded myself to be impossible.

“Six years of sorrow I spent under the influence of this dreadful conviction. I struggled with my tenderness. I endeavoured, by a close application to official duties, and by unremitting study, to wean my mind from the recollection of its keen disappointments. I had, in a small degree, succeeded, when it was my fate to have every former feeling of my soul reanimated, and all my grief more than renewed.

“Between twelve and thirteen years ago, during my residence at Toulon, I
went

went one day to visit the galley-slaves, condemned for life to the labour of the oar. The common feelings of humanity revolted at such a sight of horror. To behold beings, of the same species as one's self, chained like brutes, and goaded to unequal labour till they die beneath the toil, made my heart sink. "They are criminals; they all deserve death," said my guide, in reply to my exclamations of horror.

"Oh then, give them death," said I; "far more merciful would be such a decree, than a life of such ignominy, torture, and despair."

"So some of them would think," said the man, "but not all. You observe how they sing, and most of them look merry. There are some sulky ones among them; for instance, there is an English fellow there, who has
twice

twice attempted suicide, but that's a national disorder, you know."

"An Englishman!" exclaimed I.—
"And is there an English heart beating beneath such misery?"

"Why not?" said the man, surlily.
"Do you suppose guilt is confined to France? Why, one half of these fellows are Italians and other foreigners. There are not above four English, I believe, at present, but there have been more. There, that's the sulky fellow—that's the Suicide."

"At that moment I cast my eyes on the wretch pointed out to me, and beneath the thick disguise of all his misery I knew him—it was—Mortimer! I trembled and almost fainted. Poor Mortimer saw me not. His head was reclined on his breast—his naked arms

were folded—and his eyes were fixed upon the chain that bound him to his seat !

“ Recollecting I was exposed to public observation, I struggled with my emotions, and as calmly as possible enquired of my guide what name he bore.

“ He calls himself Mortimer,” said he, “ and says he is an Englishman—but I believe the torture would not draw any more from him.”

“ And what is his crime ?” I enquired.

“ He was taken,” replied the man, “ with a band of most desperate ruffians that have infested the woods near Toulouse these many years past, under one Salano, a Neapolitan pirate originally,
but

but who took to the *land service* afterwards, and committed murders out of number at a house in the wood of St. Alme, where he set the police at defiance for a long time ; but he was overpowered at last by a party of the military—Salano himself and four of his gang were killed in the assault, and about eight were taken prisoners—the rest escaped.”

“ And among those taken prisoners was this Mortimer ? ” said I.

“ Why, yes,” replied he, “ as I understand he was taken easily enough, for it seems he was chained by the leg to a sort of stable, in some vaults or subterraneous passage as they call it, where the gang kept their horses. Whether he was one of their murdering parties or not, I can’t tell,” continued my informer, “ but as he evidently belonged

longed to the gang, and would give no account of himself, he was condemned with seven others to the galleys."

"Poor wretch!" said I, "I must hear his story from himself," and hurried away to conceal my tears.

"You will easily conceive, Leverton, that I lost no time in procuring an order for his release. It was a task of infinite difficulty, and had it not been for my personal intimacy with the Princess of L——, then the favourite of the Queen of France, I conceive it would have been impossible, as nothing short of the King's interference could have obtained it. It is impossible to do justice to a description of our first interview. I received him alone in a little drawing room. He was still in the habit of a galley-slave. The air of intrepidity with which he entered the room ought

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at once to have dissipated every suspicion of his guilt. Yet I shuddered to behold him, and shrunk from his embrace, as he approached me, holding out my arm and averting my face.

“Tell me, sir,” exclaimed I, “tell me where is Olivia?” He started at the question, lifted his hand to his forehead, and remained silent. The dreadful suspense of that moment was painful beyond description. I repeated the enquiry. At length, with a deep groan, he exclaimed,—

“Oh send me back to slavery, or, still more merciful, strike, strike me dead, for I can never bear to live the victim of suspicion : and every hope of establishing my innocence has vanished at that question. Olivia alone possesses the power of convincing you how much you injure Mortimer by this suspicion,
and

and alas you enquire of him—where is Olivia?”

“And are you, indeed, ignorant of her destiny? Do you not know where she is screened from my vengeance?” said I.

“Vengeance!” exclaimed he.—
“Alas, she is then still more to be pitied than myself. Hard as has been my fate, Olivia’s is yet more wretched, if villainy has so completely triumphed as to make her Lord believe her guilty.”

“Make me believe,” replied I.—
“Man, do not insult the griefs which you yourself have created; do not lacerate afresh, by your insinuations, the heart already bleeding from the effects of your abominable crimes.”

“He seemed thunderstruck—re-
coiled

coiled back several paces; his eyes rolled as if a sudden phrenzy had seized his brain; he clasped his hands together in agony, and stood speechless. I gazed at him with a mixture of astonishment, terror, and pity. At length he exclaimed—

“ I see it, I am afraid I too plainly see it. The horrid truth darts like the forked fires of heaven across my brain, bringing, at once, light and destruction. Oh should my conjectures—but no, no, he cannot; no form of man can possess a soul so diabolical. Two murders upon his conscience would surely sink him living to perdition.”

“ I began now to apprehend that I was listening to the effusions of insanity. The misery he had undergone I concluded had actually turned his
brain,

brain, and I felt a keen regret that I had not, in the first instance, enquired into the circumstances, which had brought him into the situation, in which I found him. I regretted that the sense of my own wrongs had prevailed over my compassion for his sufferings. I immediately altered my tone from anger to pity. I took him by the hand, begged he would seat himself by me, and whether guilty or innocent of the crimes I had perhaps too hastily imputed to him, I requested that he would candidly disclose all the circumstances that had occurred since the elopement of Olivia.

“ Have you then not seen or heard from her since then ?” said he.

“ Never, never, Mortimer. But
you,

you, who were the companion of her flight, you, doubtless, know, where the faithless fugitive has taken refuge, and I conjure you by the friendship that once linked our hearts together, do not conceal the truth from me. Let the candour that once characterized my Mortimer, overcome all the dictates of a meaner policy, and prompt him to an undisguised narrative of those events, whatever they may be, that have brought him to the condition of a criminal and slave." Absorbed in his own meditations, he was deaf to what I said.

"He muttered to himself—"Not heard of! Not heard of since that fatal day! Can it be—Is it possible? Your pardon, my Lord; but pray where is the venerable Julian?"

"That information also I was about.

about to require of you," said I. "Surely Mortimer cannot have been so radically altered in his nature as to have become a hypocrite. Yet this ignorance is so totally irreconcilable with appearances, with facts that—"

"And Julian too, has he never appeared since then?" interrupted he, still disregarding what fell from me.

"Neither Julian nor Olivia have been seen or heard of since that hour when—"

"Why then," exclaimed he, in a collected manner, and with a firm voice, "then there is a dæmon walks the earth in semblance of a man, unless, indeed, ere this, the doom of murderers has o'ertaken him—tell me, my Lord, is Latimore alive?"

"He

“He is,” said I; “but why that question, or why associate with his name, crimes of such a dreadful nature?”

“With a dignified scorn he replied—

“Ask this toil-worn frame, which stripes and chains have marked with infamy. Ask the tear-traced furrows on these cheeks, or grief-blanch-ed hairs upon this head yet young; ask this shattered remnant of what once was Mortimer, if Mortimer has not just cause to call him murderer, whose guilty machinations hurled him to such a depth of misery and woe.”

“Oh speak more plainly, Mortimer, my friend, my injured friend, speak, and, at once, overwhelm me with
shame

shame for having harboured such unworthy sentiments of such a noble heart. Why did I trust appearances? Why did not my heart, at once, o’erturn the deceitful evidence] of seeming facts, and acquit my Mortimer of all designed ill to Derrington?”

“The tone of sincere affection in which this speech was uttered, overcame his sternness. He seized my hand, and clasped it warmly between both his own, exclaiming—

“There spoke the voice I know so well. That was, indeed, the language of friendship. Merciful God, I thank you for a blessing I despaired of. Oh, my friend, you cannot conceive the effects of your kind language, your soothing voice upon these ears, so long accustomed to barbarous and vulgar insult, or horrid oaths and blasphemies.

mies. Believe me, my dear Lord," continued he with a tenderness, yet earnestness of voice, "believe me, I am innocent.—Yet it will be no slight trial of your confidence to think me so, since for a time, at least, my innocence must be clouded in a tale of mystery. Be satisfied, my Lord, with the disclosure of such circumstances as I am at liberty to reveal, and though I am bound by an oath, which nothing shall ever cause me to violate, to conceal some name, still I will in no instance deceive you."

"Why did you leave the cottage?" said I. He replied—

"At midnight, I was awakened out of a deep sleep by two ruffians, who caused me to arise and dress myself.—I was blindfolded and bound, and in that state placed in a carriage, and conveyed

conveyed to a house, which I have since learnt was the scene of many a rape and murder."

"And Olivia and Julian—were they also carried thither?" enquired I with eagerness.

"I am inclined to think so, but have no proof."

"Have you then never seen them?"

"Never. I have seen but two faces since that memorable night, which I had ever seen before, until I had the happiness of seeing you to-day."

"And who are those two?"

"I have sworn not to discover! My secrecy was the price of life. I never will violate my oath!"

"This

“ This is indeed mysterious ! How, my friend, could you bind yourself in such an oath ? ”

“ It was thus, my Lord. Sometime after I had been confined to an apartment in that house, a man came into my room. I demanded my freedom in the most spirited and lofty language.—He deemed it insolence, and threatened to punish my temerity with death. I replied in terms of contempt and scorn. The murderer grew incensed, and aimed a blow at my undefended bosom, which laid me senseless on the floor, weltering in my blood. When I again opened my eyes to life I found myself in a kind of stable underground. It was dark. Two men stood by me, one of whom held a lantern to my face, and exclaimed to the other, with an oath—“ He is not dead—what shall we do ? ” They spoke

spoke in Italian. "Thank God, thank God!" cried the other, "perhaps we may save him." They immediately obtained some liquid and applied to the wound, which stopped the bleeding, and in time I recovered. The first object that struck me after I began to obtain the use of my senses, was the grave, or rather hole, into which I was about to be thrown, when it was discovered that I was not quite dead. My feelings at the sight are indescribable. As I gained strength, I began to sit up in a pallet of straw, and noticed the appearance of the place I was in. It was a subterraneous cavern, converted into a stable for the use of a banditti, who occupied the house in which I had been confined. The chief of this band of robbers was a celebrated outlaw, named Salano. He it was who perceived I was alive at that critical

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cal moment when himself and another were about to commit me to the earth for ever. The other, whom I well knew, perceiving that I regained my strength and reason, related the particulars of his saving me from the grave. "I have now," concluded he, "a proposal to make to you—will you live or die? He that gave you that wound believes it was mortal, and has left this wood in that persuasion. You must, therefore, make up your mind to bid farewell for ever to the light of day. Here, however, you may live, if you prefer life, upon condition that you swear never to attempt an escape from this place, and never to mention to any mortal whom you may chance to see, the name of your determined enemy. You well know, that if he believed you still living after the attempt which he has made, his own danger

would urge him, by every method, to destroy you. In consenting to your living, therefore, I expose the life of my master, and my own, for aiding him in such an enterprise. Yet, God knows, I tremble at the thought of murder, and would not hurt the hair of your head, if I was sure of your abiding by your oath."

"I wavered a short time between the choice of life on such terms, or an instant death. The love of life prevailed, and I swore the oath in the most solemn manner. By that oath I have abided hitherto, and will still abide. My destiny for life seemed thus irrevocably fixed. Ere he, whose humanity thus preserved my life at the risk of his own, departed, I begged to know what was the motive of this horrid outrage, and whether the Lady Olivia, or my friend
Julian

Julian were included in this business of destruction. The man whom I will never name, replied to me with an energy uncommon to people of his rank, for he was a servant : ”

“ Sir, I hate bloodshed. I would rather, I think, plunge a dagger in my own heart than another man’s. This prevents me from committing murder at this instant, but it rests there. I am still my master’s faithful servant, and will keep his secrets. I think I run no hazard of exposing his name to infamy by giving you your life ; if I thought otherwise, much as I abhor the deed of murder, you should surely die.”

“ He then drew Salano aside, gave him a purse of money, and, in a whispering tone of voice, urged him repeatedly to “ *swear it.* ” “ By this po-

niard it shall be done," exclaimed the outlaw. "He never quits this cavern with his life." They left the place together, and from that hour I have never seen any face I knew, till this interview, which I deem miraculous."

"Miraculous indeed," said I. "In that dark cavern then my Mortimer drew his breath till the period of the attack upon the banditti, and the death of Salano. And then, rather than betray the man who had preserved his life, he surrendered himself to the most wretched doom that can befall humanity. This, my dear Mortimer, I learnt from the overseer, at Toulon, and will, therefore, spare you the recital, and myself the misery of listening again to a tale that chills my blood. But now," continued I, "now, my friend, to cast one retrospective glance

on the lost, wretched Olivia, and the poor victim Julian.—Nay, do not tremble so. Six years of sorrow and repining has taught me, at length, to bear calamity. The providential discovery and release of my dear Mortimer, is a balance of joy against much misery and anguish. I have regained my friend, but my wife, I am persuaded, from a survey of all the circumstances, is forever lost. Heaven will avenge the infamous, the horrid deed. There is only one man living, who is capable of such an act. You, therefore, need not break your oath to tell me, it was Latimore, who aimed the stroke of death. Instantly will I fly to him, and extort from his guilty soul the knowledge of the spot where moulders the mangled form of my Olivia. Instantly to the face will I charge him with her murder, for dead, I am sure, she must be,

be, or ere this she would have broken chains of adamant to——”

“Calmly, calmly, I beseech you,” interrupted Mortimer. “I have thought o’er this subject many a sleepless night, and many a darkened day. I am inclined to think Olivia lives, and is still in the power of the worst of men. At least there is no evidence of the contrary, and the bare possibility of restoring her should make us cautious how we pursue any measure that may defeat that possibility.”

“I caught at this little reed of hope. I reposed upon it as an anchor of steel, and my mind became more calm.

“The sequel of my tale, alas, has proved how false was flattering hope.— We agreed that Mortimer’s return to
life

life should be preserved a secret, within our own breasts. The alteration which grief had made in his appearance, would have prevented almost any other eye than mine from recognising him. He had no relation, who either sighed at his supposed death, or would rejoice at his return to life. A child, indeed, he had, a boy, about three years old, at the period of his disappearance and supposed death. This child, whose mother had died in giving him existence, had, from his birth, been under the protection of his mother's brother, who becoming insolvent when the child was about five years old, had emigrated, as it was supposed, to America, and from that hour no tidings have been received of either uncle or nephew. Having, therefore, no attraction to England, Mortimer continued to travel with me on the Continent, in the disguise of an aged man.

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One motive for this conduct was, a determination to watch, clandestinely, the proceedings of the wretch Latimore, in order to obtain intelligence of Olivia.

“A circumstance of some importance occurred at Paris, very shortly after the release of Mortimer. Passing through the street, called Place du Grave, I accidentally observed, exposed for sale, at a vender of masquerade dresses, the very habit and girdle of poor Julian, the Astrologer, of Rosenbergh. The emotions excited by the sight, prevented me from asking any questions of the people of the house where it was exposed, but I instantly sent Mortimer to purchase it, and make some enquiry concerning the means by which it came into their possession. The dress was purchased, but the only information that could be gleaned

ed

ed from the possessors of it was, that they bought it of a Jew, whom they had never seen before or since. The only conclusion we could draw from the discovery was, that Julian was dead, for while he had lived, he never would have parted with that girdle, which was embroidered by the hands of one of the Countesses of Rosenbergh, in the beginning of the last century, and was considered by him as a sacred relic.

“The possession of this habit and girdle, however, suggested a stratagem to Mortimer, which he determined to put in practice. This was to dress himself in the robe, and assume, as much as possible, the appearance of old Julian, which by painting his face and the aid of an artificial white beard, he effected so compleatly, that intimate as I was with the Astrologer, I

should have been deceived by the resemblance. "In this form," said he, "I will appear before Latimore, and from the impression it makes upon him, I shall soon perceive, whether or not he was accessory to the death of Julian."

"We removed shortly after to Vienna. Mortimer had soon an opportunity of putting this stratagem in execution, and it confirmed him in the persuasion that Julian of Rosenberg had fallen by the means, if not by the hands of Latimore.

"Since that event, three or four times Mortimer has attempted to appear before him alone, in the same form. But from the day of his first appearing to him Latimore has never been alone, by day or night. It is well known a guard watches in his chamber while
he

he sleeps, and that he is tormented by most horrid dreams, which but for the vigilance of this guard would more than once have occasioned his destruction.

“ Year after year, I was alternately deluded and disappointed by hope.—No tidings of Olivia came—no vestige of her was discovered. I will not trouble you with the succession of feelings and motives, that induced Mortimer to remain concealed so long a space of time.

“ At length the death of the old Earl called Latimore to England, and Mortimer, who had watched him from place to place abroad, and who cannot even yet give up his hopes of seeing Olivia alive, followed him to England.

“ Now,

“ Now, my dear nephew, are we arrived at that period of my eventful history in which you became an actor. —At the Duchess of Derrington’s masquerade, Mortimer attended in his habit of an astrologer. He appeared, as he had done abroad, to Latimore, and addressed him by the same appellation which old Julian constantly applied to that man, whenever he spoke of him, “ *Living Monument of Splendid Misery.*” The effect was electrical upon the Earl, he almost fainted in the arms of his brother, and the whole party unmasked in terror. As he cast a look back, Mortimer himself was almost as much terrified as the Earl, for he fancied that he beheld Olivia. As he was muffled in a domino, he concealed himself among the croud, and saw the female so strongly resembling Olivia pass by him, leaning on the arm of Lady Julia Latimore. Your

OWN.

own imagination will paint his feelings. The first impression was so powerful he forgot that more than twenty years had elapsed since he had seen her, and believed that it was herself. Reflection soon dispelled that illusion, but such was the strength of the likeness, he felt convinced, that the female he beheld was the daughter of Olivia. At the same moment the recollection in whose party he saw her, filled his soul with the keenest anguish. Unable alike to conceal his painful emotions or to reveal them upon his return to me, I suffered a martyrdom of suspense from his looks and silence.—He at length confessed that he had made a partial discovery, that pained him beyond measure, but entreated me not to urge him to communicate it, till his doubts were satisfied. The Grand Dinner and Concert at Latimore House soon followed; I was compelled to sit
down

down at the first, and I was pressed by Mortimer to be present at the other.— Upon entering the concert-room, I joined your sister, Lady Mary. Near us sat the young woman, who bears the name of Melville. I was struck instantly with her resemblance to Olivia. I conversed with her. I was charmed with her, and upon enquiry learnt who she was. At that instant I noticed Mortimer in another part of the room, and went to him. I pointed out to him the object that had so much interested me, and immediately he communicated to me his former conviction. To try the temper of the Earl, and to draw forth some expression to the countenance of this girl, if she knew any thing of her own history, Mortimer had contrived to introduce a ballad through the agency of Lady Lustre, which related the story of Olivia, as we imagined it had concluded.

Its

Its effects upon the Earl answered our expectations, but upon the face of Miss Melville nothing but amiable sensibility was discoverable.

“I concluded she was innocent of all disguise, and determined to acquaint myself further with her history, her manners, and disposition. The likeness, thought I, may be accidental, or perhaps imaginary. Yet that Mortimer should feel the same conviction as myself, that this Oceana should make her appearance at Latimore House just at the period of the Earl’s arrival, seemed strong coincidences. I ventured to solicit an audience. That circumstance was so far fortunate, as it has convinced me, that this girl, be she whom she may, is the creature of the villain, Latimore. For they had so contrived it between them, that Latimore was posted a listener at the door while I was conversing with her.

“-I abruptly

“ I abruptly left them both in exquisite torture of thought, and flew to consult with Mortimer. We reasoned, we conjectured, till our minds were enervated with fatigue, but without discovering any clue that can possibly lead to a discovery of the truth respecting this resemblance of Olivia,—of that Olivia, whose image is still the delight of my imagination, while her uncertain fate is the exhaustless source of misery. From the state in which she was torn from me there is a possibility that at this moment a being may exist of which I am the Father! Father!—Child! My own Child! Olivia’s Child! Oh, Leverton, it is impossible to convey to you an idea of the feelings of this heart at the bare thought. But when I combine that thought with the resemblance of Oceana Melville to Olivia della Zoretta, and still further pursue the train
of

of ideas which such an association engenders;—her residence with Latimore—her artifice in the library—his pretended ignorance of her real name, and to complete the whole, your enthusiastic passion for this mysterious object of hope and fear, my understanding becomes incapable of arranging the swift reflux of varying ideas, and I am no longer a reasonable being. Come, therefore, instantly to Salt-hill, that your judgment may aid my future conduct, and your affection sooth my agitated mind.

“W. DERRINGTON.”

CHAPTER VI.

Private Theatricals.

THE letter of Lord William Derington rather increased than diminished the affectionate interest which his nephew had cherished for Oceana. With regret he left the mansion which in his estimation was honoured with her presence, and the society of which she was the charm. Yet the necessity of consulting with his uncle on the best means of putting an end to the proceedings in the affair of his union with Lady Julia, and still more the anxious curiosity he felt to learn every particular relative to the story of Olivia, urged him to an immediate departure from the villa.—The whole party were assembled in the saloon when he announced the receipt of
of

of a letter from his uncle, desiring his instant attendance on some business of uncommon urgency..

“ But remember, my darling boy,” exclaimed the Duchess, “ we cannot possibly do without you. Here we are all together ready for the last rehearsal. You know to-morrow evening is fixed for the play, which cannot be deferred, as I have sent tickets all round the world.”

The marquis seemed surprised. The lovely object that had taken possession of his mind had so engrossed every part of it, that he had entirely forgotten the engagement he was under to perform a part in a play, which was to be acted by her Grace's friends the following evening, in a private theatre which formed one of the wings of the villa. Young Meriton and Mr. Winterton

terton had undertaken the office of joint-managers. The drama chosen was the interesting and elegant piece, called "*Deaf and Dumb*," and the characters had been thus cast :

Julio was assigned to OCEANA.

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Darlemont,</i> | Colonel LATIMORE. |
| <i>St. Alme,</i> | Marquis LEVERTON. |
| <i>Franval,</i> | Mr. WINTERTON. |
| <i>De l' Epée,</i> | Young MERITON. |
| <i>Dupré,</i> | Captain LATIMORE. |
| <i>Dominique,</i> | The Abbé DE L' EPAN. |

M. Franval, Lady AMELIA LATIMORE.

Marianne, Lady JULIA LATIMORE.

The timid mind of Oceana revolted at the first invitation to perform any character, especially the part of *Julio*, which required her appearance in
male

male attire. The Duchess, however, insisted ; Ladies Julia, and Amelia entreated ; the gentlemen implored, and what, perhaps, had the strongest effect upon Oceana, Lady Mary Der- rington ridiculed her reluctance as a piece of gross affectation. “If *Miss Melville’s* notions were so exquisitely refined, the depravity of her present associates must be peculiarly disgusting to her nice feelings.” This piqued Oceana ; she gave her assent, and studied the part.

The Marquis, thus reminded of his engagement, assured her Grace that he would return in time for the play ; then took a cool farewell of Lady Julia, and bowing to Oceana with a respectful, yet tender expression in his countenance, left the room, and departed for Salt-hill.

In the mean time all was preparation and bustle at the villa. Every individual in the mansion was employed in some capacity or other about the Theatre, the Duke and his chaplain excepted, whose exertions were constantly confined to a morning's coursing in the neighbourhood, two hours boozing after dinner, and a game at billiards in the evening.

The day of representation arrived.—The Marquis of Leverton, punctual to his promise, returned, accompanied by his uncle Lord William. A select party of thirty were invited to dine, among whom, in compliment to Oceana, were the venerable Captain Melville, and his friends the Ormes. The Earl of Latimore and Mr. Elmer were expected, but sent excuses.

After dinner Lord William seated himself in a retired part of the room,
by

by Captain Melville, with the design of fathoming his knowledge of Oceana, whilst Captain Melville, with exactly similar views, paid particular attention to his Lordship, hoping to obtain some intelligence of the Earl of Latimore's connections abroad. After some preliminary discourse they fell into this dialogue:—

“ You have a great treasure, Captain Melville, in your daughter ; she is the admiration of us all,” said Lord William.

Captain Melville. “ She is rather too much admired, my Lord, in my opinion. I wish she were safely in Wales again. High connections are improper for small fortunes, and yet the Ladies Latimore treat her so much like a sister, that I am fearful of abridging her happiness by proposing her return.”

Lord

Lord William. "You don't think of it, I hope. Lord Latimore will surely not suffer it."

Captain Melville. "Lord Latimore, I believe, would not interfere to prevent it."

Lord William. "And yet he appears to take an interest in her concerns beyond that of any other person, not excepting his sisters. But he is a singular character."

Captain Melville. "He is a singular character! Perhaps the many years he has spent abroad have not passed without some event which may have soured his disposition. I have sometimes been inclined to believe that some love affair *may* have crossed him. God knows what may have happened in such a length of time.

time. Pray, my Lord, if the question is not impertinent, have you ever heard of any attachment, or any thing of that sort?"

Lord William. "I beg your pardon, Captain Melville, but give me leave to ask the motive of such a question?"

Captain Melville. "A woman's motive; my Lord, curiosity."

Lord William. "Nothing more, Captain? Have a care—Are you sure it is simple curiosity?"

Captain Melville. "Why not, my Lord? It is not a marvellous suggestion. Lord Latimore is somewhat advanced beyond the hey-day of youth. He is proud of his ancient descent, and yet I have not heard that there is

any prospect at present of an heir to his name. I believe there is no lady, at least not in England."

Lord William (eagerly). "Is there then in Italy, sir? I beseech you tell me?"

Captain Melville (sarcastically). Your pardon, my Lord; but give me leave to ask the motive of such a question, and the eagerness with which you put it. Curiosity is powerful, I own, *but have a care, my Lord.* Are you sure it is simple curiosity?"

Lord William. "Your raillery is ill-timed. Answer my question, sir, if you have a spark of humanity. Do you know of any lady on the Continent with whom Lord Latimore holds any intercourse? I have powerful

erful incentives to obtain this information, and I implore you, sir, not to withhold it."

Captain Melville. "We are observed, my Lord. Let us adjourn this discourse, or retire to another place."

Lord William, "Retire instantly, if you please."

They quitted the dining parlour, and closeted themselves in another apartment. The moment they were alone, Lord William, with an energy of manner unusual to him, repeated the last question—

"Do you, sir, I repeat, know any such lady?"^b

Captain Melville. "Your earnestness affects me, my Lord, since upon the
L 2
honour

honour of a gentleman, I assure you that I am unable to give you one iota of information on that subject ; though I own I have my conjectures, and acknowledge further, that I have at least as powerful motives for desiring the same information as you, my Lord, can possibly have."

Lord William. "Captain Melville, your character is unblemished. Your countenance is honest and open ; besides, your courage has sacrificed your limbs to your country's service, and, I am sure, a brave man cannot be a hypocrite. Dissembling is a coward's vice. Upon such a heart as your's frankness must beget frankness in return. I now, therefore, candidly confess to you, that till this moment I have suspected you and your daughter Oceana to be the creatures of Lord Latimore. You must forgive me,

me, but I will go further, sir, and say that from a most wonderful coincidence of circumstances, I had even been induced to think that Oceana was merely a *pretended* daughter of Captain Melville."

This unexpected challenge overcame Captain Melville, who started and stammered—

"My—m-y—my Lord—pre-tended!"

Lord William. "How! By heavens, man, you are guilty. I see it in your pale and quivering lip, your downcast eye, and tottering frame. At once I see it. This girl, to whom you have been bribed to give a father's name, is the fruit of the most foul and damned adultery. She is a bastard of your patron, Latimore, and of her whom I
once

once folded to my deluded breast. You may spare yourself apologies and explanations. I plainly read the whole progress of the business. The whole mystery is at once exposed. Too dastardly to meet me as an open rival, the despicable wretch in privacy enjoys his crimes:—but I will search the secret in the villain's heart. Olivia! Olivia! had an angel told me this I had scorned him as a liar!”

During this speech of Lord William, Captain Melville experienced a powerful change in his heart. His first emotion was resentment for the insult in its beginning. His hand flew to his sword, which had half quitted its sheath, when the conclusion of the speech made him forget its opening, and he exclaimed—“ My God, I thank you; wonderful indeed is this discovery! My God, I thank you.”

Lord

Lord William. "What now, o'd hypocrite—what new cheat? You call on God—you express gratitude! Rather in dust go hide thy shameless head, or if one drop of true compunction throbs in your heart, take me this instant to the wretched mother of this—to the poor lost Olivia!"

Captain Melville. "Sir, I have borne with your expressions; I have made allowance for the violence of your mistaken sentiments. You are deceived, if you attribute my forbearance to cowardice; you are unjust if you attribute my emotion to guilt."

Lord William. "Not guilty—false, false. He who has fostered as his own, the offspring of a guilty connection, has, doubtless, contributed his aid to the prostitution of her mother. But
hear

hear me, sir, I am resolved. This detection at once breaks down all the barriers of decency of conduct towards your detestable employer. My open accusation shall brand the wretch with such a crime, that his name shall be another phrase for infamy, and his footsteps shall be followed with the universal detestation of mankind."

Captain Melville. "Moderate, my Lord, if possible, your present feelings. I conjure you to pause—to reflect, that appearances are not proofs. I repeat to you, on the honour of a man, that whatever cause you may have to impeach Lord Latimore, I am innocent."

Lord William. "In one word, sir, will you answer me? Is she, whom you call Oceana Melville, your child or not?"

Captain

Captain Melville. "Ere I reply to that question, my Lord, some few preliminaries are necessary. In the first place, I must engage your honour, as a pledge, that if after a candid disclosure of the whole truth relative to Oceana, you should be convinced, that you are mistaken respecting her origin, you will for ever scrupulously conceal the particulars which I am about to disclose to you in your own breast alone. And, on the other hand, if the narrative should confirm your present sentiments, that then you will relate to me the nature of these sentiments, and join with me to obtain justice for the innocent offspring of a guilty parent."

Lord William. "Captain Melville, your coolness amazes me. Your intrepidity scouts the suspicions I have entertained. And yet you do not contradict my assertion, that Oceana

is the child of Latimore ! I am now more than ever astonished. Say, sir, how is all this ? I entreat you, do not keep me in this torture of suspense. I pledge my honour to your condition."

Captain Melville. " I receive the pledge. And now, my Lord, I entrust to you a secret, which only one in the world besides is in the possession of. I am not a father—Oceana is not my child."

Lord William. " Go on, sir, say whose she is."

Captain Melville. " That, my Lord, is yet to me a dark and solemn mystery. I never knew her parents."

Lord William. " Never knew ! Never knew ! Did you not then receive her from her parents ?"

Captain

Captain Melville. No. Her mother, indeed, I saw ; she was an Italian, and her name Olivia."

Lord William. "This is conviction. Where did you see her ?"

Captain Melville. "At Leghorn. She claimed my protection as a foreigner, a woman, and a martyr to persecution ; you may guess how an English sailor behaved on the occasion. I received her on board my ship, and with the help of an affectionate wife, afforded her the asylum she solicited. We were bound to the Indies. She was desirous of settling there."

Lord William. "Is she then in India, sir ?"

Captain Melville. "Alas, no, poor soul. Grief had too much impaired her

her delicate frame, and in giving birth to her child she—died.”

Lord William. “ Oh—oh God !”

As Lord William gave utterance to this sigh, a convulsive motion seized his whole frame, and for a moment or two deprived him of sense. Ere Captain Melville could reach the door to call for assistance, he had, however, sufficiently recovered to exclaim—“ Don’t, don’t expose me !” A tear of which Fortitude itself would not have been ashamed, marked the anguish of his soul beyond all the powers of speech. The attentions of the Captain, though in a rough form, were administered from the heart. In a few seconds the afflicted Lord Derrington resumed.

“ Sir, you will forgive me—you have been a husband. Dearest Olivia, if I
have

have wronged you, though but in thought, pardon me."

Captain Melville. "Wronged her, my Lord ! If I am deceived in a countenance it is the first time, and in a dying hour there could be no dissimulation. She was innocent. But listen to all the particulars, my Lord, ere you decide."

The Captain then proceeded to relate the sequel of Olivia's story ; produced the Milton, and the letter of Benson.

No sooner had Lord William perused the latter, than the whole truth flashed across his mind. Instantly recollecting that Benson was the confidential servant of Lord Latimore, he as instantaneously concluded that his assisting Olivia to escape, proved, beyond a doubt, from whom she was flying.

Comparing

Comparing the date of her departure from Leghorn with that of her disappearance from Toulouse, clearly shewed the impossibility of Olivia's guilt, and he expressed, in almost frantic terms, his conviction that *Oceana was his child*. The new idea, and its consequent sensations, almost overpowered his understanding. At one moment he seized the hand of Captain Melville, and kissed it with expressions of gratitude. The next, he upbraided himself for his injustice to Olivia.—Presently again his recollection of the conduct of Lord Latimore, amounting to a feeling of horror, disfigured his countenance, and almost in the same instant a smile beamed on his lips at the recollection of his daughter.

The mind of Captain Melville was not much more serene. Joy at the future prospects of his dear, his loved Oceana, was checked by an anxiety
how

how to open these views to her, and to the world. Lord William would have rushed instantly to her presence ; nor would the persuasions of Captain Melville have prevented him, had it not been for the circumstances of the evening. Oceana and the rest of the performers were, at the time of this momentous interview between Lord William and the Captain, actually engaged in dressing themselves for their respective characters.

“ The dress of our dear Oceana,” said Captain Melville, “ is a boy’s habit.”

“ Oh, on such an occasion as this,” exclaimed Lord William, “ the Duchess must be disappointed in her fooleries. I cannot check the feelings of my heart. The play must be put off. It is in vain to urge me, my best friend, my dear Melville. All the rest of my life I will
obey

obey your wishes; I am bound to do so: but let me embrace my child—child—oh what a word is that; what power it possesses *here*!” placing his hand to his heart.

At that instant a tap at the door was followed by an enquiry from the Marquis of Leverton, if Captain Melville was there?

“My nephew,” said Lord William. “We must admit him to our confidence, for I assure you he adores our Oceana, though he little dreams she is his cousin. But what can he want with you?”

The Marquis was admitted. There was a wildness in his manner, as he entered, and an alarm in his countenance that terrified both Lord William and the Captain, and completely repulsed the expressions of joy, with which
the

the former was about to receive him.

“ You here, my Lord ?” said the Marquis. “ I thought—I hoped—I expected—that is—”

“ What is the matter, for God’s sake speak ?” cried both his astonished auditors.

Little dreaming how *mal-a-propos* was his conduct, the Marquis took Lord Derrington aside. “ I am afraid to tell her father,” whispered he, “ but Miss Melville—”

“ I am her father,” cried Lord William. “ Say, what of my child ? Speak, if you wish me to retain my senses.—This moment I have learnt that she is mine. Where is she—why are you thus dumb ?”

Ere

Ere the Marquis could recover from his surprise, a number of people were at the door of the apartment.

“Is she there?”—“Is she there?”—“Is she there?” was echoed along the gallery.

“What is all this?” exclaimed Captain Melville. “Where is my child?”

“We hoped she was with you,” cried Lady Mary.

“I thought she came to shew you her dress,” said the Duchess.

“She *must* be somewhere,” wisely observed a third person.

At length Lady Amelia, whose affection upon the first missing of her friend made her scamper over the grounds,

grounds, and from thence into the village, came running out of breath to the Marquis. “Go—go—Thames—river—boat,” was all she could utter.

“Drowned !” exclaimed Lord Der-
rington.

“No, no, I have—met—a lad who says he saw a young gentleman dressed in nankeen pantaloons, grey coat, conveyed into a boat, and rowed off.”

Lady Julia, no less affectionately active, had been questioning all the servants, and from the gardener she learnt, that “he had seen a gentleman walking round the grounds from the time it was dark :—that he heard him mutter to himself, and at last he saw two men standing in the avenue
that

that leads to the back gate:—that as soon as they were there, the gentleman went out and talked with them a considerable time, when being called into the house, he saw no more of them. It was too dark to discern their faces,” he said, “and he should not know them again.”

All this time the real and the adopted fathers of Oceana stood speechless and motionless.

The Marquis of Leverton, who was dressed as St. Alme, placing his hand upon his sword, exclaimed—“ My honour and my life on her recovery;” and rushed impetuously through the thronged galleries of the villa, into the streets of Richmond.

END OF VOL. II.



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